

The Professional Identity of Black South African Teachers

*Personal and professional struggles in a disjunction between
policy and practice*

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Van Riebeeck's Wild Almond Hedge

Master Thesis, Faculty of Education, Insitute for Eduactional
Research

UNIVERSITY OF OSLO

December, 2008

Abstract

SAMMENDRAG AV MASTEROPPGAVEN I PEDAGOGIKK

TITTEL:

THE PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY OF BLACK SOUTH
AFRICAN TEACHERS.

Personal and professional struggles in a disjunction between
policy and practice.

AV:

Kaja Kathrine Kristiansen

EKSAMEN:

PED 4290 Masteroppgave – Didaktikk og
organisasjonslæring.

SEMESTER:

Høst 2008

STIKKORD:

Education policy

Education reform

Professional identity

Problem area for discussion

This thesis sets out to describe and deliberate on the concept of the professional identity of black teachers in South Africa. The historical and cultural context of South Africa stretching from apartheid rule to the first years of democratisation creates a frame around this study, within which I have investigated the life and work of this professional group who performs a very significant job in the process of developing a young democracy. Although this study does not claim statistical representativity, and in spite of the obvious lack of time, human and financial resources, it is my hope that the findings reveal certain tendencies that might have a broader applicability for the South African educational system and particularly for black teachers.

The thesis presents South African history, describing the introduction of apartheid, its effect on society, teachers and school system, as well as the road to its downfall with democratic elections in 1994. This serves as a contextual frame for the thesis and is followed by an introduction to basic educational reform theory and a description of South Africa's contemporary educational policy. This serves as a macro perspective, creating a base on which issues with regard to black South African teachers' professional identity are described and debated in a micro perspective.

Methodology

By employing four broad research questions, I have aimed at discovering how black South African teachers' professional identity can be defined, and evaluated the conditions for the development of a new professional identity. The practical reality of South African schooling is investigated and looked at in relation to the vast amounts of new educational policy legislation that was introduced in the wake of the great reforms that took (and are taking) place post the democratic elections of 1994. This is done through a qualitative field study where I conducted semi-structured interviews with five black teachers at a primary school in an under resourced area in Cape Town. This data material is compared to a similar study by Harley et al. (2000), and by employing the concept of professional identity the two studies are analysed using the national policy act, Norms and Standards for Educators. The aim of this analysis is to assess to which degree the teachers that took part in the studies fulfil the roles and competencies

sketched out in this document. In order to ensure some degree of methodological triangulation and to provide a complete discussion on these issues document analysis has also been employed.

Data and sources

The data and sources that are used in this study are, in addition to my own field data, an article by Harley et al. (2000) that accounts for the research they conducted in 2000. I have also employed document analysis using past and current policy legislation and other historically significant documents. In addition to this a great amount of scientific journals have been employed as means of data gathering, such as *Journal of Education and Work* (Carfax Publishing), *Teachers and Teaching*, (Elsevier Science Ltd.) and *International Journal of Educational Development* (Elsevier Science Ltd.). Many of these journals I have found using Internet sources such as ERIC (Education Resources Information Center, <http://eric.ed.gov/>) and Informaworld™ (<http://www.informaworld.com/>). In addition to these sources of information, I found information relevant to my study in the libraries of The University of Oslo, The University of The Western Cape and The University of Cape Town.

Results and conclusions

The process of creating a new, democratic and non-discriminatory educational system in South Africa, with its inherent challenges and obstacles posed enormous professional challenges for all teachers, but for black teachers in particular. The new educational legislation that was passed was complex and developed with such haste that teachers on the practice level were not included. The result was that the centralised policy directives that were passed down to the practical realm of schooling were articulated in a language unfamiliar to those who were to implement them. In addition, the new requirements that teachers were faced with were excessive, and demanded more than could be expected. In order for the South African teachers to conduct their work in accordance with the demands of the new curriculum, they would have to undergo a comprehensive professional transformation in a very limited space of time. The new educational policy was also based on the wrongful assumption that all South African educators were all at the same high level of professionalism and were more than capable of making curriculum decisions without relying on centralised dictates.

The fieldwork conducted by Harley et al. (2000) and my own field data clearly show that these teachers do not match policy expectations. However, the teachers that were part of these two studies often displayed something over and above what was expected of them. This could be seen in the way teachers in my study would take on the unprescribed role of being parents for their learners and refer to them as “their children”. Harley et al. (2000) reported that the teachers that took part in their study displayed an idealism for their work, stating that they felt a vocational calling and thus a professional commitment that was not related to policy expectations.

The educational legislation that was passed post 1994 was based on and articulated with idealism, noble intentions and with an underlying urgency to bring the country up to speed with the international community; intellectually and financially. It is clear, however, that idealism and aspirations for a prosperous, free and equal future for South Africa, could not make up for the lack of contextual analysis that was needed in order to formulate an adequate educational policy for the country. As a result of the country’s history of separation and discrimination, its school reality is greatly contrasted and the distribution of resources uneven. The policy/practice disjunction in South African educational policy shows how misconceptions on the policy level inevitably leads to conflict on the practice level, and several areas of concern need attention in order for the scales to be balanced.

An essential focal point in this thesis, is how the black teachers of South Africa can be empowered to redefine their identities in accordance with new demands. Including practitioners from the country’s school reality in the development of new educational legislation, is most likely to add to a closing of the gap between policy and practice. This may result in a more adequate and constructive policy that does not require agents on the practice level engaging in time consuming policy interpretation prior to implementation. In addition, a more balanced resource allocation to under privileged schools and increased remuneration for teachers, will undoubtedly aid teachers, and especially black teachers, in the process of creating a new teacher identity. A more stable resource foundation for black teachers coupled with an indigenisation of the country’s curriculum may increase their capacity to reflect on their professional identity. Including a greater focus on African ideas, values and knowledge systems, may capacitate the reshaping of black teachers’ professional identities as it will bring

them closer to their natural identities that were to a great extent distorted by the apartheid ideology.

Acknowledgements

To my supervisor through the process of writing this thesis, Halla B. Holmarsdottir; thank you for your patience, optimism, openness and guidance.

To the teachers and principal at Qinqa Mntwana Primary School; I am very grateful to have been allowed access into your school and into your lives. Thank you for taking valuable time off from your demanding schedule and giving me insights I would not have obtained otherwise; without your contribution, this investigation would not have been feasible.

To Nordiska Afrikainstitutet and UNIFOR for granting me research funding for my fieldwork in South Africa; thank you very much.

To my parents who took me to Africa so early in my life that it never left me, thank you! A special thanks to my father for reading parts of the thesis and contributing useful insights.

To Sharon, for taking the time to proof read my thesis – thank you!

Lastly, a big thanks to Zwai who has contributed enormously to my understanding of the country and its people by showing me “the real South Africa”, and patiently answering endless lines of questions. And of course to our beautiful son, Noah Siphesihle; thank you for being you and for tying me to South Africa in the way that you do.

Abbreviations

AIKS	African indigenous knowledge systems
ANC	African National Congress
C2005	Curriculum 2005
CMC	Curriculum Management Committee
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions
CYL	Congress Youth League
DoE	Department of Education
DoW	Department of Welfare
ELRC	Education Labour Relations Council
LAC	Learning Area Committee
MK	Umkhonto we Sizwe
NAPTOSA	National Association for Professional Teachers' Associations
NEPI	National Education Policy Investigation
NTSI	National Training Strategy Initiative
OBE	Outcomes Based Education
PAC	Pan Africanist Congress
SACP	South African Communist Party
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SADTU	South Africa Democratic Teachers' Union
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission

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1. INTRODUCTION

On the eastern slopes of Table Mountain, amidst aloe trees and protea flowers¹, grows a wild almond hedge. It is characterised by its enormous intertwined branches and a tendency to grow horizontally as much as vertically (SANBI 2008). Its capacity for growing both tall and wide was useful for Johan Anthoniszoon "Jan" van Riebeeck, the first white settler in South Africa, who planted the hedge in 1660 in an attempt to fend off the indigenous Khoikhoi people² (Kristiansen 1996). The planting of the wild almond hedge is, to me, condensed with symbolism; I find that it quite physically marks the origin of separateness in South Africa. Little did Riebeeck know, to which extent the idea of separateness would affect the future of the country where he had recently set foot, and how the ideas associated with this hedge would find its way into the minds of all South Africans. When the Nationalist Party in South Africa introduced a form of government labelled apartheid³ in 1948, the intention was to ensure white supremacy by creating a society that separated its members according to the colour of their skin. Social, political, educational and financial privileges were ascribed to different population groups in the country, measured after the darkness of their skin; the darker you were the less privileged⁴. Although apartheid as a form of government was formalised only in 1948, the idea of separateness had been introduced nearly 300 years previous, and had already managed to soundly establish itself as a set of values and guidelines for social and political behaviour that had, and still has, an enormous influence in the South African society.

From the onset, the ideology of apartheid naturally permeated the South African education system, preliminarily through missionary schools and later through a formalised national system of education. Within the sphere of education, significant socialisation processes take place that contribute to shape knowledge perspectives, culture and behaviour, which is deemed suitable for society. The citizens of South Africa were thus shaped to become what

¹ The protea flower is the national flower of South Africa. It is part of the Fynbos family, which is the natural shrubland or heathland vegetation occurring in a small belt of the Western Cape of South Africa (SANBI 2008).

² Riebeeck was a Dutch colonial administrator who joined the Dutch East India Company (VOC) in 1639, after which he served in a number of posts abroad. On discovering that he conducted trade of his own account, however, the company called him back, and it was decided that he should be sent to a post as deserted as possible (Kristiansen 1996). Therefore, in 1651, the VOC requested that he undertake the command of the initial Dutch settlement in the future South Africa, and he landed in Cape Town on April 6th 1652, where he was Commander of the Cape from 1652 to 1662 (Kristiansen 1996).

³ *Apartheid* is the Afrikaans word for apartness. The word *afrikaans* is the Dutch word for African, i.e. the African form of the Dutch language.

⁴ Details on apartheid legislation with regard to race classification will be described in more detail in Chapter 2.

the apartheid ideology deemed suitable, and consequently the different population groups experienced systematic and long term attribution of certain characteristics that did not constitute any natural part of their identities. This especially applied to the non-white population of South Africa, and it is within the realm of identity and education that the focal point of this thesis lays. I have chosen to focus specifically on black teachers and their professional identities in relation to the comprehensive educational changes that were introduced after the country's first democratic elections in 1994. I would like to underline that the choice of black teachers is a result of length constraints, and does not imply that the apartheid ideology did not affect the identities of other racial groups as well. It is a sad and undisputable fact that most previously disadvantaged non-white teachers, still live in under resourced areas and work at under resourced schools, and thus struggle with the exact same issues as black teachers do.

As democracy dawned on South Africa in 1994, the country faced the daunting task of reshaping its educational system, and with it, its teachers. Comprehensive educational changes were introduced and teachers were faced with the challenge of redefining both their personal and professional identities. My initial point of departure for this study was a sense of curiosity for this group of professionals. In the process of developing a democracy, I wanted to inquire into the life and work of those who play one of the most significant roles in this process. Viewing South African teachers' part in this work in a wider perspective can fill you with awe as they in their everyday lives are shaping the future citizens of South Africa. The potential for a healthy democracy rests with these young and the teachers that are there to lead them into their futures; thus, they have an awesome task at hand. With the awareness of past discrimination and injustice, as a backdrop I chose to investigate the phenomenon of professional identity. Having defined this specific area of interest, four broad questions came to mind with regard to black South African teachers:

- A. What are the conditions for the development of a new professional identity?
- B. How can their professional identities be defined? And in which way and to what extent do their personal and professional identities overlap?
- C. How are the comprehensive requirements of the South African educational policy reform experienced and tentatively implemented in their professional reality?
- D. How, and in which way, have they coped with transforming their professional identities to suit the new South African teacher role, as prescribed in policy.

In this thesis I will attempt to answer these questions and view them in a greater educational, societal, political and professional perspective. A discussion that revolves around issues related to black South African teachers requires that they be placed in a historical context. Therefore, Chapter 2 presents a brief insight into the history of South Africa from the introduction of apartheid. I will describe its legislation and the effect it had on society in general and on the school system and black teachers in particular. Teachers' resistance against apartheid will also be accounted for, as well as the general resistance movement in South Africa that eventually achieved victory over the country's discriminatory rule. This general depiction of South Africa's historical background serves as an essential backdrop for the subsequent discussions in the thesis, and attempts to provide an overarching historical and political context.

Chapter 3 continues with a description of a qualitative fieldwork inquiry conducted in Cape Town in 2005. The research methods employed in this process, which include both semi-structured interviews and document analysis, will be accounted for. The fieldwork inquiry will later be seen in relation to a research report by Harley et al. (2000), and the two studies will be analysed in relation to the policy document Norms and Standards for Educators, in an attempt to answer the research questions posed in this introductory chapter.

Chapter 4 aims at creating a macro perspective on the concept of educational reform and the contemporary educational policies of South Africa. This perspective will aid in the subsequent analysis of fieldwork, and attempts to form a systemic background on which to continue a discussion, in a micro perspective, on the concept of black South African teachers' professional identity. Chapter 4 presents Fullan's (1991, 2001) theory on education reform, and the following presentation of South Africa's contemporary educational policy will be analysed and critiqued, using both Fullan (1991, 2001) and other educational theorists. The main objective with this chapter is to provide insight into conditions for reshaping the professional identities of black South African teachers (research question A).

In Chapter 5, the concept of professional identity is described and debated. I will relate this concept to Ubuntu, which has a particular relevance for black South African teachers, and with this as a backdrop, I will go on to look at how policy expectations meet the practical reality for the new South African teacher. Norms and Standards for Educators outlines roles and competencies that South African teachers are expected to fulfil. In this section I will analyse these expectations using the concept of professional identity, and with this concept

as a frame of reference I will compare the policy expectations to the reality discovered through my own fieldwork and Harley et al.'s (2000) study. My aim with this analysis is to evaluate how the teachers that took part in the studies fulfil the roles and competencies sketched out in Norms and Standards for Educators, and thus present a perspective on South Africa's educational legislation in relation to the practical sphere of schooling and teachers' lives. The research questions regarding how teachers have coped with transforming their professional identities and how the educational changes have been implemented, will be answered in this chapter (research questions B, C, D).

Finally, in Chapter 6, a twofold deliberation is presented. The first section aims at combining the macro and micro perspectives, which have been presented and debated in previous chapters by discussing the policy/practice disjunction in South African educational policy in relation to the studies conducted by Harley et al. (2000) and myself. It will also include reflections from theory and critiques presented in the thesis. The following section is a deliberation on the mechanisms of personal and national identity formation and an attempt to sketch out a possible way ahead. The thesis will then be briefly summarized.

1.1 Definition of Terms

I see it as necessary to present a clarification of the terms that will be used in this thesis with regard to the population groups of South Africa. When discussing the past and present South Africa a problem arises with regard to the definitions of identity and race. Many wish to eradicate the four racial categories employed by the apartheid government in fear of lending legitimacy to racial labels that should be irrelevant. Others prefer to use an inclusive category to refer to the three non-white groups (Fiske & Ladd 2004). I have chosen to use the same racial terms as applied by the apartheid government; black, coloured, Asian and white. Although these were hated terms by the oppressed people of South Africa, they are still commonly used and have become more than just labels. In one perspective it can be said that upholding the use of these racial classification terms maintains a focus on the differences of the South African people; both the real and the constructed ones. However, one can also argue that by using the terms one facilitates a clear and concise discussion on actual matters, and that ridding oneself from the use of these terms can be done only from this point of departure.

The discussion in this thesis will largely revolve around the people labelled as black by the apartheid classification laws. The terms Asian and coloured will be used when discussing these groups in particular, and the term non-white will be used when referring to the black, coloured and Asian population groups as a whole.

2. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF SOUTH AFRICA

2.1 The apartheid system and its laws

In order to fully understand the South African context it is necessary to give a brief historical background of the country. Due to length constraints, I have chosen not to go into detail on South African history prior to 1948. I realise that there is a historical period before this, but I find it more appropriate to begin this thesis with the implementation of the apartheid system, as I believe this has had the most influence on black South African teachers and their identities. *South Africa. A Modern History* by T.R.H. Davenport and C. Saunders (2000) will provide a more complete historical discussion.

In 1948, the Nationalist Party in South Africa led by Dr. D.F. Malan gained a narrow victory over the United Party of General Jan Smuts, and apartheid as a form of government was introduced. This marked a victory for the conservative fraction of Afrikaner⁵ Nationalists and introduced an aggressive line of politics that promoted white domination and privilege⁶ (Kallaway 2002). The implementation of the policy, was referred to as separate development, and was made possible by *The Population Registration Act (Act No. 30) of 1950*, which divided all South Africans into fixed racial categories: Bantu (black African), white (of European descent), or coloured (of mixed race). Indians, who previously were not recognized as permanent inhabitants of South Africa, were included under a category labelled Asian in 1959. This category also constituted people with Malay and Pakistani origin⁷. The act made provision for the issue of identity cards to be carried by all non-whites. In accordance with this act, each inhabitant of South Africa was classified and registered in accordance with their racial characteristics, which largely determined their social and political rights, educational opportunities, and economic status. The Office for Race Classification organised the population into groups using criteria such as outer appearance, general acceptance and social standing. For example, it defined a white person as one who

⁵ *Afrikaners* is the term used for the descendants of the Dutch colonizers arriving in the 17th century.

⁶ The initial apartheid idea was based on a notion that the different population groups of South Africa would benefit from separate development; the ethnic groups of the country were meant to separately develop their own distinctive characters. The South African government even promoted this idea aiming to attract tourist to the country (Krstiansen 1996).

⁷ I would like to specify that people belonging to the population group labelled Asian were, and still are, commonly referred to with more specificity, i.e. Indians are referred to as Indians, people of Malay origin in the Cape area are commonly referred to as Cape Malay, and Pakistanis are referred to as such. People in everyday language use these labels, and they are the common label employed by the media.

“in appearance obviously is, or who is generally accepted as a white person, but does not include a person who, although in appearance obviously a white person, is generally accepted as a coloured person” (The Population Registration Act, No. 30 of 1950:277). Many aspects of a racial profile were of a social nature, and thus reclassifications were common and led to lengthy bureaucratic procedures conducted by yet other boards⁸ (U.S. Library of Congress, Country Studies 1997).

The system of apartheid was further enforced by a series of laws passed in the 1950s. *The Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act (Act No. 55) of 1949* banned marriages between non-whites and whites. *The Immorality Act (Act No. 5) of 1927* had already banned any “illicit carnal intercourse” between whites and all non-whites (The Immorality Act, No.5 of 1927:14). On the grounds of this act, the police would track down racially mixed couples suspected of being in relationships; their homes were invaded and mixed couples caught in bed were arrested. With *The Immorality Act (Act No. 23) of 1957*, it also became a crime to display intent or interest in conducting a relationship with a member of a different race (U.S. Library of Congress, Country Studies 1997). These acts show with all clarity the contempt displayed by the apartheid government and the reprehensible moral backdrop that these laws were passed on.

The Group Areas Act (Act No. 41) of 1950 assigned races to different residential and business sections in urban areas. This added further restrictions on the already limited right of blacks to own land, entrenching the white minority's control of over 80 % of South African land (U.S. Library of Congress, Country Studies 1997).

In addition, other laws prohibited most social contacts between the races. *The Reservation of Separate Amenities Act (Act No. 49) of 1953* stated that all races should have separate amenities such as toilets, parks, and beaches - and that these need not be of an equivalent quality. Under the provisions of this act, apartheid signs were erected throughout South Africa (U.S. Library of Congress 1997).

The Promotion of the Bantu Self-Government Act (Act No. 46) of 1959 furthered the divisions between the races by providing for the gradual development of self-governing

⁸ I find it interesting, and on the border of amusing, to note the bizarre results of the practice of reclassification. In 1987, for example, 918 people applied to be reclassified, out of which 722 were successful. The result was that 269 blacks were redesignated as coloureds; 244 coloureds as white; 33 coloureds as Indians; and 4 whites as coloureds (Barber 1999:260).

Bantu national units. Following this act, ten African homelands were created and administered by what were supposed to be re-established tribal organisations. There were in total 12 homelands, which constituted 59% of South Africa's land surface and were meant to fit a vast majority of the population (Horrell 1971:48)⁹. The act also made sure that black people entered white areas (i.e. the rest of South Africa) as migrant labourers only (Horrell 1971:23).

Through further legislation, every black South African was made a citizen of one of the homelands, effectively excluding blacks from South African politics. Most of the homelands, lacking natural resources, were not economically viable and, being both small and fragmented, lacked the autonomy of independent states (Vosloo 1976).

As a result of these policy regulations, many non-whites were evicted from properties that were in areas designated as "white only" and forced to move into so called townships. Due to lack of employment in the Bantustans people formed settlements on the outskirts of larger cities and thus gained access to work and health care facilities, although the living conditions in general were very poor.

2.2 The South African School System Under Apartheid

The Bantu Education Act (Act No. 47) of 1953 codified several aspects of the apartheid system, its major objective being to enforce separation of races in all educational institutions. The act decreed that blacks should be provided with separate educational facilities under the control of the Ministry of Native Affairs, rather than the Ministry of Education, and 15 separate departments of education ran the system. The black pupils would be taught their Bantu cultural heritage and, in the words of Hendrik F. Verwoerd, minister of native affairs, would be trained "in accordance with their opportunities in life", which he considered "did not reach above the level of certain forms of labour" (Horrell 1971:65). The apartheid government wanted to ensure that the non-white population remained uneducated and preferably within the agricultural sector and thus a very low level of science and mathematics were taught in the Bantu education system (Hartshorn 1992). The act prohibited

⁹ Certain citations in this thesis are referenced with page number, but do not show a marked quotation (""). This is because the thesis text is close to the referenced text, but not an exact quotation. I have chosen to insert page numbers in these instances as it indicates this closeness.

blacks from attending white institutions, with few exceptions, and established separate universities and colleges for blacks, coloureds, and Indians.

Government aid to black learning institutions was greatly reduced and forced them under the direct control of the state; the schools were badly equipped and understaffed, and most of the black teachers received an education of low quality (Hartshorne 1992). In addition, most of the missionary schools that had contributed to the education of black children for centuries were closed down as control of the education system was transferred to the state. The schools that were not closed down were put under the control of white, Afrikaner Nationalist principals and teachers (Hartshorne 1992:197). Schooling was compulsory only for white children, and many black families could not afford the school fees and thus their children did not receive any education at all. Black children who could afford the school fees were educated in the ideology of apartheid; the teacher was the mediator of the 'true knowledge' given by the state, and the learners were not allowed to analyse or question the contents they were taught. What the teacher said was the truth and had to be accepted (Hopfer 1997).

In short, the policy of Bantu education was aimed to spread the ideology of apartheid by integrating it in the educational system on all levels. In this way, black and other non-white youth were directed to the unskilled labour market and white control and prosperity was ensured. All of this was carefully orchestrated and implemented in the name of "God". The government skilfully controlled the media; they convinced the white electorate that the cause was "just" and would greatly benefit non-whites in South Africa. The ANC and other political parties suggested that private schools be set up, but the authorities were well prepared and had made it compulsory for all schools to be registered with the state. By 1956, the majority of black youth were forced into Bantu education, which in the matter of a few years had extended to non-white Universities and Colleges (Hartshorne 1992).

2.3 South African Teachers Under Apartheid

2.3.1 Teachers' education and working conditions

In 1910, the Union of South Africa was formed as a dominion of Britain, and since then the responsibility for teacher education in South Africa was divided between the national and provincial government. Colleges of education and the training of teachers for primary education were a provincial responsibility carried out by colleges of education, while

secondary teacher training was a national responsibility undertaken by universities and later technikons¹⁰ (Welch & Gultig 2002).

As Bantu education was implemented in the 1950's the responsibility for teacher training was further divided. White teacher education remained with the provinces of Western Cape, Natal, Transvaal and The Orange Free State; Indian and coloured teachers were trained in their respective colleges of education, while black teachers received their education from the Department of Bantu Education. As the homelands emerged, each homeland was given the responsibility for primary teacher education colleges within its own area (Parker 2002). Black students were rarely accepted at white universities, unless they had special permission from a cabinet minister. In certain instances, a black student would be admitted in a white higher educational institution if their own institution was overcrowded (Parker 2002).

In this description of South African teacher training during apartheid, it is crucial to point out that becoming a teacher was one of the very few occupations available to the black population of South Africa. This naturally led to a number of students starting their teacher training not because they had any desire to teach, but because becoming a teacher was likely to ensure them an income and could possibly become a leaping board to other employment at a later stage.

Needless to say, the quality of the black teacher training left much to be desired. The education they received was shorter and less academic than teacher training for white teachers, and black teachers would be allowed employment without proper qualifications, resulting in relatively poor teaching standards (Hartshorne 1992). In addition to low quality training, black teachers had to cope with unsatisfactory physical working conditions. Teaching material was either missing or inferior to that of white schools. Black schools rarely had running water or electricity, and there were often three times as many learners in a class compared to white schools (Kachelhoffer 1995). In short, black teachers were considered to be of less value than teachers with a brighter complexion. Bantu education's major spokes person, Hendrik Verwoerd made this painfully clear in a notorious Senate speech in 1954:

¹⁰ A technikon is an institution of higher education that has a greater focus on the practical sciences than purely academic institutions, such as universities.

The Bantu teacher must be integrated as an active agent in the process of the development of the Bantu Community. He must learn not to feel above his community, with a consequent desire to become integrated into the life of the European community. He becomes frustrated and rebellious when this does not take place, and he tries to make his community dissatisfied because of such misdirected ambitions, which are alien to his people (Senate speech by Verwoerd 1954 cited in Hartshorn 1992:235).

2.3.2 Teachers' role in the fight against apartheid

The non-white teachers, and particularly black teachers, played a significant role in the resistance to the apartheid system. From the 1950s to the mid-1990s, no other social institution reflected the government's racial philosophy of apartheid more clearly than the education system. The schools were required both to teach and to practice apartheid and black schools, as opposed to white schools, were under strict bureaucratic control from the government (Chisholm 1999). The history of teacher resistance dates back to the 1950's, but was conducted on an individual or localised scale, and during the 1980's, more students than teachers were at the forefront of the opposition. Towards the end of the 1980's however, the actions of teachers changed radically as they became more militant and organised; acts of resistance were conducted on a mass scale and were initiated by a teachers' union¹¹ (Chisholm 1999). The protests took the form of stay-aways, so called "chalk-downs", marches to regional offices, submissions of list of grievances, sit-ins, and the prevention of departmental officers from visiting schools (Department of Education and Training, Annual Report 1990 cited in Chisholm 1999:116). The latter is seen as one of the pivotal points for the change in teachers' resistance. As a means of control over black teachers and schools, officers from the Department of Education would monitor teachers using a checklist that would evaluate them in terms of four components:

- curricular efficiency
- extra-curricular efficiency
- personality and character traits
- professional disposition and attitude.

¹¹ There are two main distinct teacher movements in South Africa; the National Association for Professional Teachers' Associations (NAPTOSA) emerged in the early days of apartheid, whereas South Africa Democratic Teachers' Union (SADTU) arose in the context of emerging internal opposition in education to apartheid. Both cut across race but are in numbers dominated by black teachers; in practice, leadership of NAPTOSA is exercised by white teachers and the union by black teachers (Chisholm 1999).

Due to the growing and increasingly active resistance of teachers, the evaluation of professional disposition and attitude was used to measure and assess loyalty to the department that controlled black education. The teachers that did not measure up to the expected standards stood the risk of punishment in the form of suspension, transfer or dismissal. This applied especially to the teachers who belonged to SADTU or participated in other forms of active opposition (Chisholm 1999:116).

The details of what took place in the educational system, and how black teachers' conditions were affected after the democratic elections in 1994 will be dealt with in detail in Chapter 4 and 5.

2.4 The Struggle Against Apartheid

Resistance against the apartheid system was mainly conducted and organised by the African National Congress (ANC). Acknowledging the existence of The Pan Africanist Congress (PAC), the South African Communist Party (SACP) and the Black Consciousness Movement, and these organisations' role in the resistance movement, I choose to focus on the ANC in this brief description of the struggle against apartheid.

The ANC was formed in 1912 as the first non-tribal organisation of blacks promoting black interests under white rule. Up until the 1940s the ANC's trust in the possibility of compromise remained a platform for the organisation, resulting in an attitude of aloofness, removed from the harsh realities of black peoples' everyday life (Davis 1987). The ANC did however catch up with the realities, and few years after the Nationalist Party came to power the Defiance Campaign was launched, promoting peaceful, but forceful resistance against the repressive system. In this campaign, black people were urged to dress formally, act politely and behave as if they had the same legal access to public facilities as white people. They would sit in white parks, on white benches reading their newspapers in peace; they entered the first class white carriages on public transport and used white public toilets. Another widespread form of resistance was the refusal to carry identity documents, which led to great problems for the police force, as they did not have facilities to arrest the thousands of people who refused to carry their documents (Kristiansen 1996). In 1955, the ANC drafted The Freedom Charter, which claims that:

South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white, and that no government can justly claim authority unless it is based on the will of all the people... (ANC, Freedom Charter 1955:no page number).

This cooperative and non-violent agenda was continued until 1961 when Umkhonto we Sizwe (“Spear of the Nation” in Zulu, hereafter referred to as MK), a semi-independent body of the ANC with a military mission, was formed. It was the police force’s relentless violence and continued attacks on the people that was the incentive to this change in tactics, and the ANC started a campaign of sabotage led by Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela (Davis 1987).

One can not discuss the ANC’s fight against apartheid without including Mandela, who together with Oliver Tambo, Walter Sisulu and Govan Mbeki formed the backbone of the resistance movement. Mandela, Tambo and Sisulu formed the Congress Youth League (CYL) in 1944 and paved the way for the mass actions of passive resistance mentioned above. Preceding the formation of MK and their sabotage actions, Mandela, Sisulu and Mbeki were charged with recruitment for guerrilla warfare for the purpose of violent revolution furthering the objects of communism, and aiding foreign military units when they invaded the Republic. They were found guilty on all charges and sentenced to life imprisonment. At this time, other central figures in the ANC leadership were either under banning orders or in exile. Davis (1987) states that it was the incarceration of these key executives “irtually beheaded the ANC and the organisation was shattering “(Davis 1987:20). Extremely tense and violent years followed with South Africa in a state of civil war. During this time, the ANC had to conduct most of its work underground; there were great conflicts with other liberation movements, and the government did all it could to spark possible tensions in order to split the resistance. The ANC did however manage to survive. It gained allies and created a nationwide infrastructure of resistance against the apartheid state, which eventually led to negotiations with the apartheid government and democratic elections in 1994.

2.5 The Downfall of Apartheid Rule

As the 1980’s were coming to an end local and international pressure on the apartheid government, as well as the realisation that apartheid could neither be maintained by force forever, nor overthrown by the opposition without considerable suffering, both sides came to the negotiating table. The first meeting between Mandela and the National Party government came while P.W Botha was President; however, they made little progress (Kristiansen 1996).

Botha had declared that apartheid was dead, but he never rejected the policy of white supremacy; it thus follows that the common grounds for negotiations were limited (Deegan 2001). In 1989, W.F. de Klerk was elected the new State President and in his first address to parliament, he transformed South Africa by lifting the ban on the ANC and other banned organisations and political parties, and releasing Mandela from prison (Barber 1999).

In the following years negotiations continued, but were steadily threatened by grave eruptions of violence, resulting in the ANC leaving the negotiation table accusing De Klerk's government of complicity in the Boipatong massacre where 39 people were killed (ANC 1992). They re-entered negotiations, but experienced another breakdown with the assassination of "Chris" Hani, leader of the SACP. This brought the country to the brink of disaster, but ultimately proved a turning point, after which the main parties pushed for a settlement with increased determination. The assassination of Hani is sometimes considered as an event, which led to a shift of power in favour of the ANC because of Mandela's handling of the situation. He addressed the nation appealing for calm, in a speech regarded as 'presidential' even though he was then not president of the country (Deegan 2001:198):

Today an unforgivable sin has been committed (...) A man of passion, of unsurpassed courage has been cut down in the prime of his life. Chris Hani is known to all of us, loved by millions, hated only by those who fear the truth (...) Chris Hani championed the cause of peace, trudging to every corner of South Africa calling for a spirit of tolerance among our people. We are a nation in mourning. Our pain and anger is real. Yet we must not permit ourselves to be provoked by those who seek to deny us the very freedom Chris Hani gave his life for (...) ANC dips its banner in salute to this outstanding son of Africa (ANC 1993:no page number).

On the April 27th 1994, South Africa held its first democratic elections. The entire police force and the military were ready to handle any disruption that might occur and damage this new beginning in the history of South Africa. They were left with nothing to do; despite the long lines of people waiting for hours to cast their vote, the elections were conducted peacefully and resulted in the ANC winning 62% of the vote, and Nelson Mandela becoming president, with De Klerk and Thabo Mbeki as deputies. The National Party, with 20% of the vote, joined the ANC in a Government of National Unity (Kristiansen 1996). Transitional politics continued after the election, with a new constitution finally agreed upon in 1995.

As an end note to the closing of this chapter of South African history, I believe it is essential to briefly describe the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) as it contributed to

making South Africa's transition to democracy something out of the ordinary. The TRC was established in 1995 and intended to serve as the instrument through which South Africa would come to grips with its discriminatory past and allow for a peaceful transition into democracy. The underlying assumption that the TRC's work was based on is that understanding the past by letting perpetrators narrate their politically motivated crimes will aid in the creation of a more peaceful and democratic future. In hindsight, there is disagreement on how successful the TRC actually was. It was no doubt a very bold venture, consuming vast amounts of resources by holding hundreds of hearings, interviewing thousands of victims of apartheid, granting amnesty to nearly a thousand human rights violators, and producing a massive final report¹² (Gibson 2006). According to many, the truth and reconciliation process was exceptionally successful, believing that it prevented South Africa from erupting in a racially based civil war. According to Gibson (2006), however,

“South Africans themselves are not so sanguine about the process (...) Many complain that the TRC exacerbated racial tensions in the country by exposing the misdeeds of both the apartheid government and its agents and the liberation forces. Some vehemently reject the conjecture that “truth” can somehow lead to reconciliation, claiming instead that uncovering the details about the horrific events of the past only embitters people, making them far less likely to be willing to coexist in the new democratic regime. Indeed, based on my casual observations of the South African media, complaints and condemnations of the truth and reconciliation process seem to far outnumber laudatory assessments (Gibson 2006:84).

Gibson (2006) adds that social scientists should be more agnostic about the TRC process, and that it is remarkable how little systematic investigation has been conducted into whether or not the TRC actually succeeded in its objectives (Gibson 2006). In my opinion, the TRC succeeded insofar as the emotionally injured people of South Africa experienced that they were healed and could move on with their lives. It is, however, hard to tell how many this actually applies to. Did all those involved in the hearings and interviews experience this healing? How extensive was the symbolic effect of the TRC? These are questions one can hopefully gain answers to after thorough sociological research. My personal experience from

¹² For further reading on the TRC process I strongly recommend *Country of My Skull – Guilt, Sorrow and the Limits of Forgiveness in the New South Africa* by Antjie Krog, which is a gripping document on the national healing process that took place in South Africa in the first years after 1994. André Brink, professor of English language and literature at the University of Cape Town and acclaimed author, is quoted on the back cover of this book: “Trying to understand the new South Africa without the Truth and Reconciliation Commission would be futile; trying to understand the Commission without this book would be irresponsible” (Brink 1998 cited in Krog 1998).

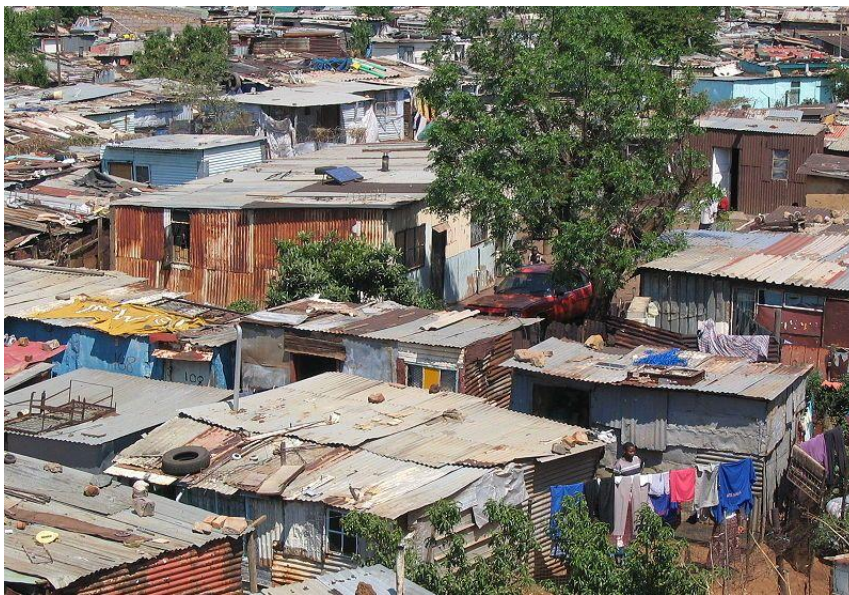
speaking with South Africans, who were oppressed in the past, is that to most, the TRC has had a limited effect and many will point to statistics of violent crime¹³ in South Africa, which is a certain sign that many hearts and minds still need to be healed.

¹³ For further analysis and a more informed insight into causes and possible solutions for violent crime in South Africa, see Mark Shaw's "*Crime and Policing in Post-Apartheid South Africa. Transforming under Fire*" (Shaw 2002).

3. METHODOLOGY AND DATA COLLECTION

In the following, I will describe and debate the scientific methodology utilised to gain answers to the research questions posed in the introductory chapter of this thesis. Firstly, however, I see it as being of great importance to provide an insight into the historical, cultural and social context in which these research enquiries were made.

3.1 Setting the scene



A township like any other in South Africa

As the Group Areas legislation was effectuated, the impact was devastating; well-established communities were dislocated as the inhabitants of these communities were subject to the apartheid government's forced removal-strategy at the end of the 1960s. An estimated 150 000 people were moved to new public housing estates or 'townships' built on the Cape Flats (Wilkinson 2000:197 cited in Turok 2001:2351). There were, however, many people who were not moved to a government designated area, and this resulted in several unplanned settlements, often referred as squatter camps or shantytowns. In short, the development of townships, squatter camps and shantytowns had its origin in the need for black people to sell their labour services to the white population as the city's economy was growing and the native reserves could not cater for an expanding population (Holmarsdottir 2005).

Crossroads was a squatter camp where people first settled in 1975. It was initially seen as a

transit camp for black people who were to be moved to other legal township settlements, however, by 1980, it developed into a permanent township and its residents could lay down arms after years of battles with the government to avoid the demolition of their dwellings (Reynolds 1983 and Henderson 1999 cited in Holmarsdottir 2005:38). Due to obvious length constraints, I will not delve further into the history of this area and the development of its settlements. However, for a more detailed description of the development of this township see Henderson's *Living with Fragility: Children in New Crossroads* (1999). According to a ten year review report by the Human Sciences research Council in 2003, the conditions in Crossroads have generally improved since the 1990's. This, however, is seen in comparison to the very unstable conditions in the 70's and 80's and does not imply that the situation with regard to employment, education and crime is satisfactory (HSRC 2003). For instance, community safety in Crossroads is experienced as extremely bad and is therefore a major contributing factor in the emergence of disorder and dissatisfaction in the community. Local youth gangs represent the major cause of crime in Crossroads; they are young and unemployed and thus poverty driven in their criminal activity, which for the most part consists of street robberies of schoolchildren, professional women and the elderly (HSRC 2003:90). The HSRC report (2003) also states that since 1998 crimes of violence in Crossroads have risen:

Robbery with aggravated circumstances, which can probably be taken as an indicator of the general state of personal safety in Crossroads, has more than quadrupled, while murder and assault have doubled or nearly doubled. Burglaries and vandalism have more than doubled. The distribution of crimes, which are rising fastest – and particularly the surge in vandalism – suggests increasing social anger (HSRC 2003:91).

The report contends that with regard to crime schools appear to be a somewhat safer place to be than outside of the school grounds. It is assumed that the reason for this is that gang members do not risk trying to commit robberies inside the schools as they risk crowd reprisals by the learners. It has been reported that attempts to rob teachers and learners in class have resulted in the robbers being chased and beaten by both teachers and learners (Cape Argus 2003 cited in HSRC 2003). As robbers will in effect immediately be outnumbered, they may prefer not to risk being hurt or killed without being able to escape easily. However, immediately outside the school gates the weight of numbers again reverses, and individual schoolchildren with lunch money remain a prime target of gang shakedowns, as are teachers with earrings, cash or cell phones (HSRC 2003:91).

In spite of this, inhabitants of Crossroads report general satisfaction with regard to education delivery. The area has one secondary/high school and three primary schools in addition to several pre-school facilities, and teachers and principals report that the educational climate is good with an acceptable level of attendance and school facilities in reasonable condition (HSRC 2003).

My own initial experience with this township, started on an April morning of 2005. Having set a time for the first interview at Qinqa Mntwana P.S, I apprehensively stepped on to a mini bus taxi and made my way to Crossroads¹⁴. Arriving at Nyanga Junction, about a one-kilometre walk from the school, I was struck, as always, by the stark contrasts of Cape Town. A mere half hour drive takes you from the well organised and urban city centre with surrounding suburbs to this lively and vibrant, but nonetheless, scruffy neighbourhood. As you step out of the mini bus taxi that brings you to the township you are met by the pungent smell of garbage and a malfunctioning sewage system, the sight of dogs in desperate need of some soap and water, the 'skorro-gorro'¹⁵ taxis far from being road worthy, and the self constructed shacks in all shapes and forms, constructed by all kinds of materials and put up wherever the owner could find something resembling an open space. As I first arrived in Crossroads, I watched the inhabitants of Crossroads hurriedly making their way to work or school, or putting up their spaza¹⁶ shops along the side of the road where they fry maize and meat or sell other goods. However, I was also reminded of the severe unemployment statistics as I observed all those who seemingly wander without any specific direction or anything in particular on their daily agenda. Being aware of the unemployment statistics and knowing how this is a major contributing factor to poverty, violence and crime, the harshness of the township life suddenly becomes very real. It is a life without compromise,

¹⁴ It should be noted that I experienced strong reactions to my solo expedition to Crossroads; both from white people who have never set foot in a township, but also from township inhabitants who reprimanded me for my foolhardy adventurousness, and alerted me to the dangers of moving around without company in an unfamiliar and potentially dangerous area. The reactions from white suburban residents, I believe, were affected by a lack of any genuine familiarity with the townships, their knowledge in most cases being acquired through the general tabloid media coverage of crime and poverty from these areas. The reactions from township inhabitants, however, were based on a more realistic risk calculation. Taking public transport into an area such as Crossroads without the company of someone who is well acquainted is without doubt a reckless thing to do considering the crime statistics. However, I find it very important to stress that I have never had any negative or frightening experiences during my stays in several South African townships; I have on the contrary felt very safe, protected and welcome.

¹⁵ 'Skorro-gorro' is the slang name for a vehicle in very poor condition; it can be used for bicycles as well as cars, buses and minibus taxis. It should be noted that the minibus taxis, which is the most commonly used means of transportation, are usually in a sorry state. It is not unusual that doors can not be closed, windows have fallen out, that half of the seats are missing, and you often get a good view of the engine through the holes in the floor as you sit inside the taxi.

¹⁶ A spaza shop is a local term for a home based or pavement shop (Holmarsdottir 2005).

and one, which I believe, requires toughness unfamiliar to those who do not exist under such circumstances.



Women and their spaza shops in a South African township

3.2 Research Methods

3.2.1 A Qualitative Research Approach

“Qualitative inquiry means going into the field – into the real world of programs, organisations, neighbourhoods, street corners – getting close enough to the people and circumstances there to capture what is happening” (Patton 2002:48).

As the thematic choice of this study is an inquiry into the field of professional identity, the use of a qualitative research design seemed most appropriate. Strauss and Corbin (1990) state that qualitative research is “any type of research that produces findings not arrived at by statistical procedures or other means of quantification” (Strauss & Corbin 1990:10, 11). Quantitative studies usually apply more structured methods, while in qualitative research one can enter the field with thematic inquiry and ask questions outside of the schedule, as well as probe and prompt the respondents. In this way, one can obtain answers, which are rich in detail, and one opens for the free and personal reflection of the respondents (Bryman 2004). Although this might lead the interview in an unplanned direction, it often contributes to shed

light on unexpected themes, gives rise to new ideas and perspectives, and thus aids in explaining, describing, and exploring the social behaviours.

It is my opinion that when exploring the concept of professional identity a qualitative research approach is required as I believe it is an issue, which is closely related to life histories. A life history is typically a non-quantifiable area as it deals with a person's experiences in both micro and macro perspectives. In the case of the black South African teachers I interviewed at Qinqa Mntwana P.S, it became clear at an early stage in the interviews how closely these teachers' personal life histories were connected to the greater historical, cultural and sociological history of South Africa. I can not go as far as to say I applied the life history research method as originally developed by Thomas and Znaniecki in the 1920's (Goodson & Sikes 2001). I would rather say that the life history research method's focus on context and identity served as inspiration and contributed to shape my frame of mind prior to interviewing the teachers at Qinqa Mntwana P.S. Goodson and Sikes (2001) contend that life historians chose this research method as it

... explicitly recognizes that life is not hermetically compartmentalized into, for example, the person we are at work (the professional self) and who we are at home (parent/child/partner selves), and that, consequently, anything which happens to us in one area of our lives potentially impacts upon and has implications for other areas too (Goodson & Sikes 2001:2).

Goodson and Sikes (2001) contend that it is a common problem in research on teachers' work to treat teachers' professional identity as something that is singular and unproblematic in nature. In this perspective the teacher becomes depersonalised, his /her identity becomes synonymous with his /her role and function, and one loses sight of the greater perspective. As opposed to certain other research methods, the life history method aims specifically at acknowledging the essential humanity and personal significance of the people that are being researched (Goodson & Sikes 2001). Teachers do naturally share certain common characteristics, but an investigation into the teacher's personal biography and historical background will show distinctions that should be mapped in order to give a more comprehensive understanding of their professional identity (Goodson & Sikes 2001).

3.2.2 Sampling a target population

In the preliminary enquiries I made into how to obtain the information about my field of interest and on how to identify a research population, I was advised my supervisor, Halla B.

Holmarsdottir, to contact Qinqa Mntwana P.S in Crossroads¹⁷. As this is an area with mainly black inhabitants, I was likely to identify respondents here that matched my research criteria. Holmarsdottir had previously conducted research in the area where this school is located and thus spared me both the time and effort in finding a suitable population for my research. Also, in relation to her research a research permit was already obtained from the Western Cape Education Department, which allowed me to smoothly proceed with my inquiries.

At the onset of this investigation, I was unsure of how many respondents should be part of the study, however, after conducting five interviews I found that the respondents' answers had, a thematic coherence that lead me to conclude that the sample size was sufficient. Goodson and Sikes (2001) refer to saturation when discussing sample size and conclude in the words of Morse (1994) that sample size is adequate when

... sufficient data have been collected and saturation occurs and variation is both accounted for and understood... In qualitative research, the investigator samples until repetition from multiple sources is obtained (Morse 1994:230 cited in Goodson & Sikes 2001:23).

The research sample was chosen using a method of purposeful sampling. Patton 1990) states that

... the logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases for study in depth. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research, thus the term purposeful sampling (Patton 1990:169).

Sarantakos (1998) explains the following concerning purposive sampling:

The researchers purposely choose subjects who, in their opinion, are thought to be relevant to the research topic (Sarantakos 1998:152).

Purposeful sampling is a term often used in combination with theoretical sampling, which originated with the discovery of grounded theory. The sociologists Glaser and Strauss

¹⁷ The principal at Qinqa Mntwana P.S. informed me in a preliminary interview that the school was established in 1994, but up until the current school building was constructed in 2003 the school had been part of a platoon system where two schools used the same building; one school would occupy the premises in the morning swapping with the other school in the afternoon. A site had already been provided for the building of the school and money had been allocated, but the amount was not sufficient and the building process was delayed while the community approached the Western Cape Education Department to apply for further funding. However, by the time, the application was approved and more money was allocated to build the school, the school site had been occupied by dwellers that were reluctant to move. Eventually in 2001, three members of the dweller's community approached the principal and informed her that they had decided to move to make room for the school. The construction plans could then proceed and Qinqa Mntwana Primary School was completed in 2003.

developed grounded theory in 1967, as a rigorous method of analysing qualitative data in order to produce theory. Due to time and space constraints, I will not include this dimension of sampling in this study and I choose to lean on Patton's view that (1990) all types of sampling in qualitative research may be encompassed under the broad term of *purposeful sampling* (Patton 1990). He states that "qualitative inquiry typically focuses in depth on relatively small samples, even single cases, selected purposefully" (Patton 1990:169).

In the case of this particular study, I first used a snowball sampling method, as it is appropriate to the research topic when informants are not well known. When utilising this sampling method the researcher usually begins with one person or a small group of people who are relevant to the research topic, and then uses these to establish contacts with others or name others to the researcher. The process continues until no more respondents are discovered or when the researcher is satisfied with the data (Sarantakos 1998). In this case, my supervisor, Halla B. Holmarsdottir, served as the person whom I initially contacted to allow for a more easy access to the informants I wished to interview. When she had assisted me in establishing contact with the school I intended to choose informants from, I employed purposeful sampling to identify informants and arranged times for interviewing them. This was done by firstly arranging a meeting with the principal of the school. In this meeting, I presented the basic ideas for my study and asked if the principal could assist me in finding teachers that would be willing to take time off to be interviewed. The informants were thus selected and I arranged with them the time for the interviews. The interviews were conducted on three different days, as the informants were not all available on the same day. The principal was interviewed twice; first in the role as principal of the school, then in the role as a teacher in the school as she has teaching duties as well as being a principal. The first interview served to provide me with essential background information on the school and its history, as well as the history of the community surrounding the school and its present circumstances.

3.3 Data collection instruments

3.3.1 Semi - structured interviews

Interviewing is the one most common and most powerful way we use to try to understand our fellow human beings (Fontana & Frey 1994:361).

Interviews in qualitative research come in different forms and may differ depending on the purpose of the research topic, the research objectives, and resources available (Sarantakos 1998). Having identified the topic which I wanted to investigate I decided on a semi - structured interview approach as this would allow me the sufficient degree of flexibility regarding the wording of the questions and the sequence in which they were asked. A semi - structured interview approach, as opposed to a structured approach, would also allow me to reword or ask new questions if necessary, as well to prompt the respondents. When employing a structured interview procedure the interviewer poses prepared series of questions with a limited set of alternatives. The researcher reads the prepared questions and in this way, all respondents receive the same set of questions in the same succession. As opposed to the semi-structured interview, this allows for little flexibility, as one does not have the option of adjusting the content of the questions, the order and wording.

In order to ensure a degree of focus in the interview I constructed an interview guide with both specific and thematically wide questions, that I hoped would shed light on my area of interest (see appendix). I purposely did not update myself extensively on the literature and research in the field of professional identity, as I wanted to enter the field with as few preconceptions as possible and without a desire to confirm established hypotheses. Prior to the interviews I was, however, well informed of the history of South Africa with regard to the current democracy development and educational legislation.

There are certain ethical issues that should be considered prior to conducting a qualitative research interview. Flick (2006) notes that principles of research ethics ask that “researchers avoid harming the involved participants by respecting and taking into account their needs and interests, such as not invading their privacy and deceiving them of the research’s aim” (Flick 2006:45, 46). In order to ensure this the research should be based on the respondents’ informed consent, meaning that they agree to partake based on the information given to them about the research project provided by the researcher. As the reader will have noticed, (also remarked in footnote no 5) the school where I conducted my research is mentioned by name. This is with the expressed consent of the principle of the school. Before the start of the interview, I informed the respondents of the aim of my research and how that data material would be employed. I also ensured the respondents that their names and other biographical data would not be disclosed, and I believe that this allowed for a free and open conversation, as the respondents did not risk the broadcasting of the private details of their lives as well as their personal opinions.

Each interview was recorded using a dictaphone and lasted between one and one and a half hours depending on the how much time, the teacher could spare away from his or her work. I was, however, satisfied with the information gathered from the interviews, and I felt that although the teachers were pressed for time they did ponder each question carefully and seemed both focused and impassioned in their reflections. I experienced that employing a semi structured interview approach was beneficial, as the conversation with the teachers would often touch upon areas that was not part of the interview guide, but still had relevance to the topic being investigated. The flexibility that a semi structured interview allows for gave me the chance to find alternative angles to the thematic areas in the interview guide and thus allowed the interview to flow freely and gave the respondents the chance to associate without constraints.

The interviews were conducted over a space of five weeks (April/May, 2005). I conducted five interviews at different times at the convenience of the teachers at the school. At the start of the interview, I asked some general questions on the teacher's background, such as where they grew up, where they went to school, and if they had had other occupations prior to teaching. This allowed me to acquire some biographical information on the respondents that made us better acquainted and gave me a broader picture of who they were. It is my personal experience this removed some of the formal aspect of the interview situation and created a relaxed atmosphere that aided the respondents in thinking and speaking more freely. Generally, it is hard to say to what degree the behaviour of the interviewer, the type of questions being asked, and the way these questions are asked impact on the respondents and their answers. Larsen (2007) alerts to the risk of influencing the outcome of the interview by for example behaving in a specific way and asking questions in a way that suggests a desired answer (Larsen 2007). Personally, I made an effort not to dominate in the interview situation so as to allow the respondents the time to speak and reflect without interruption. I did, however, not attempt to restrain myself with regard to responding to the teachers in an encouraging manner, expressing my interest in the subjects they were talking about. I experienced that this contributed to openness in our communication. I would like to alert the reader to the words of Fontana and Frey (2005) regarding scientific neutrality in the interview situation:

... much of traditional interviewing concentrates on the language of scientific neutrality and the techniques to achieve it. Unfortunately, these goals are largely mythical (Fontana & Frey 2005:696).

The point I wish to make is that in an interview situation two (or more) people are involved and that the exchange that takes place leads to “the contextually bound and mutually created story – the interview” (Fontana & Frey 2005:696). Fontana and Frey (2005) refer to Scheurich (1995), who states that the interviewer is not a “neutral tool”, but a person who is “historically and contextually located, carrying unavoidable conscious and unconscious motives, desires, feelings and biases” (Scheurich 1995 cited in Fontana & Frey 2005:696). I believe that an acknowledgment of this fact makes the researcher aware that he or she actually takes a stance in the interview situation and that this might contribute to obtaining the desired richness in the data material. Fontana and Frey (2005) contend that this so called empathetic approach takes an ethical stance in favour of the individual being studied as “the interviewer becomes an advocate and partner in the study, hoping to be able to use the results to advocate social policies and ameliorate the conditions of the interviewee” (Fontana & Frey 2005:696). With regard to my study, I believe that this perspective substantiates my attitude towards the interviewees and the type of qualitative research I conducted.

3.3.2 Document analysis

After completing the interviews, I wished to discover the greater context in which these teachers lived and worked. I wanted to investigate the greater political reality that regulated their professional lives, and realised that I would have to go back in time in order to obtain the necessary amount of information. Sarantakos (1998) states that in social research employing documents as an instrument for data collection can be very helpful, especially when dealing with past events (Sarantakos 1998). The documents used for data collection in this study are retrieved from different sources. A great amount of scientific journals have been employed as means of data gathering, such as *Journal of Education and Work* (Carfax Publishing), *Teachers and Teaching*, (Elsevier Science Ltd.) and *International Journal of Educational Development* (Elsevier Science Ltd.). Many of these journals I have found using Internet sources such as ERIC (Education Resources Information Center, <http://eric.ed.gov/>) and Informaworld™ (<http://www.informaworld.com/>). The Internet also proved a most helpful tool when attempting to find apartheid legislation from a time prior to electronic web based information services. The ALUKA database (<http://www.aluka.org>) and the official website for the African National Congress (<http://www.anc.org.za>), supplied me with historical speeches, statements and political legislative documents needed to underpin sufficiently the descriptions of South Africa during apartheid rule. Historically significant

documents created before the time of electronic data processing, have been scanned from their original paper version and published both on the ALUKA database website and on the official website for the African National Congress.

In addition to these sources of information, I found information relevant to my study in the libraries of The University of Oslo, The University of The Western Cape and The University of Cape Town.

3.4 Data Analysis

3.4.1 Transcribing the Interviews

The interviews were recorded using a dictaphone and then transcribed into written text so as to structure the interview dialogue. Kvale (1997) states that a recorded interview can be transcribed in various ways, depending on how the data material will be used. When a transcription aims to display, sociolinguistic or psychological phenomena it is essential that the oral form not be edited to suit the ear of the reader. If, however, the transcription aims to give a general impression of the respondents' opinions and life situation it will aid the analysis if the transcription is edited in a way that makes it more easily accessible to the reader (Kvale 1997). As the focus of my study was to obtain as rich and detailed information as possible on the personal and professional lives of the respondents, I did not see the need to transcribe the interviews word for word and sound for sound. I rather chose to edit the recorded interviews in a way that would provide a more meaningful written text and thus permit a smoother analysis in accordance with my focus; an investigation into the professional identities of the teachers at Qinqa Mntwana P.S.

3.4.2 Reliability, Validity and Generalisation

According to Kvale (1996) validity in data collection means that an item measures or describes what it is supposed to measure or describe. With regard to reliability, he argues that it pertains to the consistency of research findings (Kvale 1996). Kvale (1996) contends that in modern social science "the concepts of generalizability, reliability and validity have reached the status of a scientific holy trinity" (Kvale 1996:229). Certain qualitative researchers have dismissed these terms as oppressive positivist concepts that do not allow for a creative and emancipatory qualitative research while other qualitative researchers, such as

Lincoln and Guba (1985), have introduced alternative terms, using ordinary language to discuss the truth-value of their findings (Lincoln & Guba 1985 cited in Kvale 1996). Lincoln and Guba's (1985) term, *trustworthiness* includes the notion of *credibility*, *transferability*, *dependability* and *confirmability*. These terms thus replace the terms *generalizability*, *reliability* and *validity*, which are more clearly associated with quantitative research (Lincoln & Guba 1985 cited in Kvale 1996).

It has been noted, however, that in qualitative research the researcher is the instrument (Patton 1990), and it thus follows that the validity of the research can be said to depend on the skill, competence and rigor of the fieldworker. Kvale (1997) employs a similar and 'non-abstract' notion of validity and states that validation depends on the handcraft quality of the research, where the findings are continuously checked, investigated and subjected to theoretical interpretation (Kvale 1997:167). In this study I chose to rely on this concept of validity and have strived to ensure validity by attempting to provide clarity in my reasoning and in the interpretation of research findings, as well as realising that the data material collected is limited and not statistically representative.

I have, however, attempted to employ certain means of triangulation in an attempt to increase the validity of my findings. Patton (1990) states that triangulation offers a powerful solution to the problem of relying too heavily on any single data source and it involves comparing and cross-checking the different sources of data. My means of triangulation involved using document analysis as a research method in addition to semi-structured interviews. The documents I have used consist of past and current policy legislation and other historically significant documents. I have also relied on research conducted by Harley et al. (2000), which is centred on the same research topic as this thesis sets out to investigate. Thus I believe that this combination of data sources helps to increase the validity and thus also the reliability of this study.

This study does not attempt to generalise its findings. It was not possible to conduct a larger and possibly more representative study, as the amount of research participants was limited and only a few teachers at one school were part of the research. In spite of the obvious lack of time, human and financial resources, it is my hope that the findings reveal certain tendencies that might have a broader applicability. Although I am far from claiming statistical representativity, it is a fact that there are many schools like Qinqa Mntwana P.S in South Africa. It is also a fact that all these schools are subject to the same political

regulations that are sadly out of touch with the harshness, which is a reality for many South African schools.

4. EDUCATION REFORM AND CONTEMPORARY SOUTH AFRICAN EDUCATIONAL POLICY - A MACRO PERSPECTIVE

Sections 4.1. and 4.2. present a macro perspective on the concept of educational reform and the contemporary educational policies of South Africa. This discussion is an attempt to create a systemic background on which to continue a discussion, in a micro perspective, on the concept of black South African teachers' professional identity. As it is my opinion that the concepts of professionalism and identity are better served being discussed in a micro perspective these concepts will be defined and discussed in this chapter. I have chosen to use Michael G. Fullan's theory on educational change to deliberate on the phenomenon of reform and in turn, the effects it has on teachers¹⁸. Fullan's (1991, 2001) theory on educational reform will be presented in section 4.1. and then applied in section 4.2. in an attempt to analyse South African contemporary educational policy. The objective is to provide insight into the overarching conditions for the development of a new professional identity (research question A), in order to aid the following discussion on how black teachers' identities can be defined, how educational changes have been implemented, and how the teachers have dealt with these changes (research questions B, C, D).

I would like to underline that although Fullan (1991, 2001) does analyse aspects of educational reform in relation to a micro perspective on the practice level, his theoretical point of departure is on a systemic macro level. While it is clear that his theory can be used to analyse the practice level further I chose, due to constraints in time and space, to mainly focus on his theory's applicability on the macro level. In section 5.3, however, I will revisit his ideas on the effects that educational change has on teachers and schools in order to construct a holistic frame around the analysis of this aspect.

¹⁸ Due to space constraints, I choose to let M. Fullan (1991, 2001) represent major perspectives in the field of educational reform. His work is supported by theorists such as Stephen Ball, Richard Bowe, Linda Darling-Hammond, Andy Hargreaves, Larry Cuban, Ann Lieberman and others. For further reading on educational reform and related issues I suggest *Reforming Education and Changing Schools – case studies in policy sociology* (Ball et al. 1992); *Schools as Collaborative Cultures: Creating the Future Now* (Liebermann ed. 1990); *Reforming again, again and again* (Cuban 1990); *Instructional Policy into Practice: the power of bottom over the top* (Darling-Hammond 1990) and *The right to learn: A blueprint for creating schools that work* (Darling-Hammond 1996). Compilations such as *International Handbook of Educational Change* (Hargreaves et al. eds. 1998) and *International Handbook of Curriculum Research* (Pinar ed. 2003) also provide useful insight into these subjects.

4.1 Fullan's Theory on Education Reform

In *The New Meaning of Educational Change* (1991, 2001), Fullan delves into the field of educational change and attempts to explain, among other things, what change is; how educational change works and the subjective realities of coping with change. In short, Fullan (1991, 2001) provides a framework for deliberating on the phenomenon of educational change and gives an explanation as to why seemingly rational change strategies sometimes do not work. At the same time, he includes the perspective of those affected by change. In discussing the subjective realities of change, Fullan (1991, 2001) focuses on teachers and their reactions to change. As already mentioned this will be dealt with in more detail in a following chapter. I wish to point out that Fullan (2001) bases his analyses on studies conducted in North America, as well as England and certain parts of Eastern Europe (Fullan, 2001:xii, xiii). I argue, however, that Fullan's (1991, 2001) reflections on teachers' conditions can be linked to the South African context, and are in many ways relevant for the South African system and its teachers.

Fullan (1991) asks: What are schools for? and What is reform for? The answers to these questions are complex and can not be answered briefly. Fullan does give an outline as to which frame the questions are answered within, stating that when it comes to the purpose of schools, it aims at a two-sided development that he labels cognitive/academic and personal/social. These two types of development refer to the knowledge and skills that students are taught in schools and that will equip them with the abilities required to function as citizens of a society. Fullan (1991) does, however, contend that the overall purpose for schools in democratic societies is to achieve equality of opportunity.

Regarding the purpose of school reform, Fullan (1991) explains that according to theory, educational change should help schools reach their goals more effectively by replacing certain structures, programs, and practices with ones that work better. A question that keeps reappearing, however, is whether or not these changes actually lead to improvement and if not, why they fail to do so. Fullan (1991) stresses that change for the sake of change never leads to improvements of any kind and that new educational programs might make matters worse than if there had been no change at all. Educational change is linked to societal change, but educational reform is no substitute for societal reform, although it may contribute to the latter. The failure of educational change can, in some instances, be explained by the fact that societal, political, and economic forces inhibit change within the

educational system. Achieving successful change is a matter of creating meaning and an understanding of both the great and the little perspective. In other words, attention must be paid to both the content and the process of change; one must use the simplicity of common sense as well as the complexity of theory. The process of educational reform in a post-modern society is a complex one and requires an understanding of its dynamics as well as the ability to see the relationships between the different educational levels in a society. As mentioned above the key point here is meaning, or the lack thereof. Neglecting the phenomenology of change is at the heart of many failed social and educational reforms and so it is of great importance that the individuals at all levels involved in change processes experience a subjective meaning of the change that is taking place (Fullan 2001). This is central to making sense of educational reforms and thus to their success.

4.1.1 Sources of educational change

Fullan (1991) refers to Levin (1976) and his explanation for educational change; according to Levin (1976) there are three broad ways in which pressures for educational policy change may arise:

- Through natural disasters, such as earthquakes, floods, famines and the like.
- Through external forces, such as imported technology and values, or immigration.
- Through internal contradictions, such as when indigenous changes in technology lead to new social patterns and needs, or when one or more groups in a society perceive a discrepancy between educational values and outcomes affecting themselves or others in whom they have an interest.

(Levin 1976 cited in Fullan 1991:17)

Out of these three types of pressure leading to educational change, only the internal contradictions, where there is a discrepancy of values, apply to the South African situation. One can say that the non-white majority of South Africa experienced a discrepancy of values as they were denied basic rights as citizens of a society and discriminated against by the apartheid government. This discrepancy eventually resulted in the political opposition winning democratic elections in 1994, followed by comprehensive reforms, including extensive reforms in education.

Fullan (1991) points out that there will always be a certain amount of pressure for educational change in pluralistic societies. The important questions to focus on are who

benefits from the change and how feasible the idea is. In addition to this one must always focus on the appropriateness of innovations that are introduced (Fullan 1991). The intentions behind a proposed educational change are irrelevant if the appropriateness of the innovation is not fully considered. An educational reform can be introduced without a proper analysis of the context in which the reform is to be implemented. In such a case, the ones responsible for the reform assume that the proposed change is objectively a good one and that the only problems they may encounter are practical ones with regard to the implementation. This discrepancy between intention and appropriateness is a common cause for failed educational innovations when they are initiated and conducted, for example by university scholars. Fullan (1991) refers to Silberman (1970), who points out how these reforms fail because they are based on overly abstract theories. Even though the scholar-initiated reforms have the best intentions they fail, as they are not relatable to practical realities; they seem to lack an understanding of how the reform relates to the purpose of schools and educational innovations, and thus become ends in themselves as the reformers lose sight of the supposed purpose of change (Silberman 1970 cited in Fullan 1991). The central questions to be asked are, as Silberman (1970) puts it: “What is education for? What kind of human beings and what kind of society do we want to produce? What methods of instruction and classroom organisation as well as subject matter do we need to produce these results? What knowledge is of most worth?” (Silberman 1970:182 cited in Fullan 1991:19). With these questions in mind, one might avoid change for the sake of change, and ensure that the reform is not adopted for purely symbolical political and personal reasons. Darling-Hammond (1998) adds to this perspective as she underlines that in order to achieve desired change schools require that more knowledge is put directly into the hands of educators and not organised to “trickle down” to teachers from the top of hierarchical systems in the form of memos, directives, texts and curriculum guides (Darling-Hammond 1998:661).

According to Fullan (2001), the main problem is not the absence of innovations in schools, but rather an overload of too many fragmented and disconnected projects (Fullan 2001). This corresponds to the South African educational situation post 1994 as the reform that was about to take place affected every level of the educational system, and thus turned out to be fragmented and disconnected in nature. Fullan (2001) comments that schools which attempt to implement every new proposed change that comes along will look innovative from the outside, but suffer from a great level of meaninglessness on the inside. The goal, Fullan (2001) stresses, is to appreciate the necessity and richness of external knowledge, but not to

become victimised by it (Fullan 2001:21). This can be done if reform implementation is not disconnected and disorganised, and if the schools, where they have a choice, develop the ability to sort out which programs to pursue and which to discard. In the case of the South African educational reform schools can not be said to have any real choice in whether or not to implement, or at least to try to implement, the new educational legislation. The reform was more than a change in the educational system; it was a necessary ideological change on every societal level, taking South Africa from dictatorship to democracy.

4.1.2 Challenges in achieving educational change

According to Fullan (2001), most researchers define three basic phases in the process of educational change.

- The initiation phase is the process prior to and including the decision to proceed with a change.
- The implementation phase involves the first experiences of putting a reform into practice.
- The continuation phase is the period following an implementation, and refers to whether the change becomes institutionalised as a continual part of a system, or disappears due to decision to discard the change or through attrition.

(Berman & McLaughlin 1977; Huberman & Miles 1984 cited in Fullan, 2001:50)

The focus here will be on the implementation phase as it has the most relevance to the situation of educational reform in South Africa and the way it can be related to black teachers' professional identities. In this perspective it does not seem relevant to delve into the initiation phase of the South African reform process, and as for the continuation, it is, in my opinion, too early to be conclusive on the permanent changes made to the educational system of South Africa and the end effect of these changes on black teachers' professional identities.

The implementation of educational change entails a change in a practical realm, of which there are many. For the sake of simplicity, Fullan (2001) uses the classroom as an example to clarify viewpoints on educational innovation. The scope of educational innovation is not easy to grasp and many do not realise that change is a multidimensional phenomenon, and that the implementation of any new program incorporates at least three components:

- the possible use of new or revised materials

-
- the possible use of new teaching approaches
 - the possible alteration of beliefs

(Fullan 2001:39)

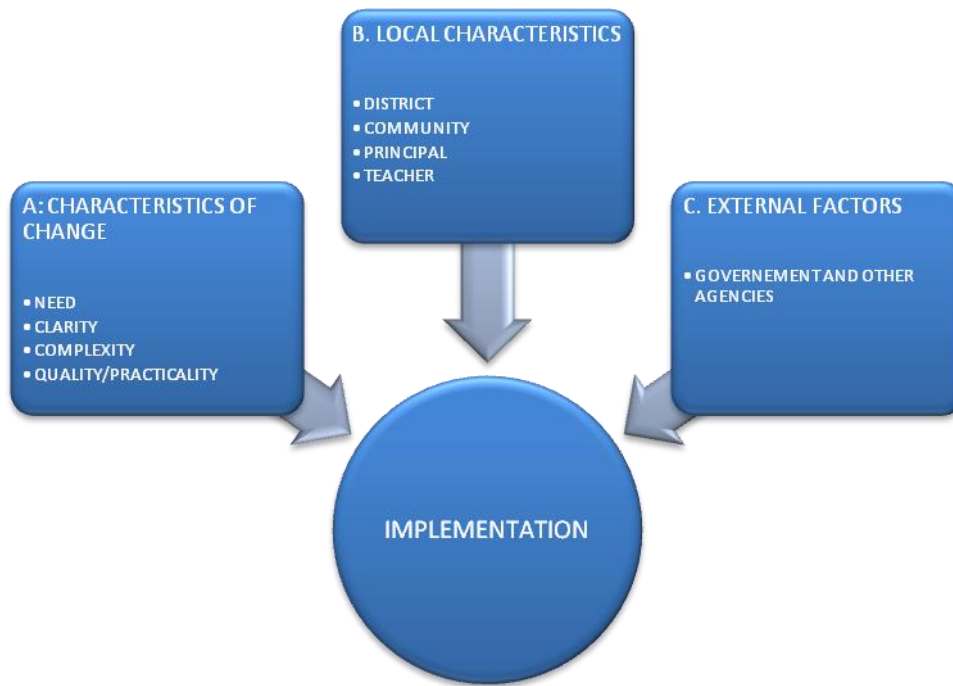
Whether a proposed educational change will be implemented relies ultimately on the quality and the appropriateness of the change. Assuming, however, that the change is one of quality and appropriateness all of the above-mentioned aspects must be present in order for change to occur in practice. Fullan contends that innovations that do not include changes on these dimensions are not likely to result in significant changes (Fullan 2001).

In order to achieve real change one must alter ones conceptions and behaviour (dimension 2 and 3). Behavioural change is a challenging task, but changes in conceptions are even more difficult as they challenge an individual's core values regarding the purpose of education. To add to the challenge beliefs and values are often implicit and "buried at the level of unstated assumptions" (Fullan 2001:44). However difficult it is to alter beliefs and conceptions, it is the change of these that ultimately will constitute lasting reform (Fullan 2001).

The challenges of actual implementation of educational change do not end with the three dimensions being present. Fullan (2001) identifies critical factors that influence change in practice and describes how the implementation process works. Several factors determine whether successful educational change will be achieved. These factors should not be seen in isolation from each other, but rather be seen as a system of variables that interact in a dynamic process determining the degree to which a change in practice is achieved (Fullan 2001).

Figure 4.1 lists nine critical and interactive factors that affect implementation. The factors are organised into three main categories, which refer to (A) characteristics of the change project, (B) local roles and (C) external factors, and these categories will be described in more detail below.

Figure 4.1. Critical factors that influence educational change in practice



(Source: Fullan 2001:72)

Regarding the first characteristic of change that which is perceived as a *need* may be subject to disagreement. Teachers, for instance, often do not see the need for a proposed change. In order for change to be successful, the ones involved must agree that the needs in question are significant and that there is progress towards meeting these needs. When it comes to *clarity* concerning goals and means, it is essential that the people involved in the change process have a clear understanding of what they must do differently. In other words, it is not enough to agree that change is needed; there must also be clarity on how to bring about change. A lack of clarity, that is, diffuse goals and unspecified means of implementation represents a problem in the implementation phase, and may lead to *false clarity* which means that the change is interpreted in an oversimplified manner (Fullan 2001:77). Clarity, however, is no end in itself as difficult changes may be complicated to achieve if the change is complex. This brings us to the third characteristic, which is *complexity*. It refers to the difficulty and extent of change required of the individuals responsible for implementation. Simple changes can be easy to carry out, but may not result in great practical differences. Complex changes, however, aim to create a greater difference, but require more work and have more to gain if the change is successful. Correspondingly, there is more to lose if the change should fail (Fullan 2001:78).

Regarding the fourth characteristic of change, *quality* and *practicality*, Fullan points out that low quality and a lack of practicality may arise when adoption decisions spring from political necessity or perceived needs without time for development. This is especially important to focus on when new learning material is concerned because when excessive attention is being given to the adoption of a new educational change, rather than the implementation of it, decisions are frequently made without taking the time to generate adequate material (Fullan 2001). This is expressed by Fullan (2001), who states that: “In order to achieve substantial reform one must work persistently on multilevel meaning across the system over time.” (Fullan 2001:80).

In figure 4.1. local characteristics refer to the social conditions of change; the setting in which people work; and the events and activities that determine whether the change attempts will be successful. Fullan (2001) puts emphasis on the role of educational change administrators at the district level. They must set the conditions for implementation by showing specific forms of support as well as displaying an understanding of the implementation realities for schools (Fullan 2001). The role of community and school boards will not be given attention as the focal point of this thesis lies with issues on a macro (system and context) and micro (teachers) level. I see issues such as the role of community and school boards belonging on a meso level and thus they will not be dealt with.

With regard to the role of *principals* and *teachers*, however, it is relevant to point out that change relies ultimately on them; they are the ones with the power to promote or block educational change. Most principals do not play change leadership roles, but his or her actions legitimate whether or not a change is to be taken seriously, and to support teachers psychologically and with resources (Berman & McLaughlin 1977 cited in Fullan 2001:83). Teachers and principals generally struggle with many of the same issues when it comes to their roles as facilitators of change as it is a complex role, for which they have little preparation. Darling-Hammond (1998) relates to this and stresses the importance of policy makers to understand that “policy is not so much invented as re-invented at each level of the system” and that “what ultimately happens in schools and classrooms is less related to the intentions of policymakers than it is to the knowledge, beliefs, resources, leadership, and motivations that operate in local contexts” (Darling-Hammond 1998:646). Teachers’ role in coping with and implementing educational change will be dealt with in more detail in the following chapter.

The external factors that influence implementation place the school in a broader societal context, i.e. departments and faculties of education. According to Fullan (2001), it is central that congruence exists between this “outside set of forces” and the local school reality (Fullan 2001:86). Government agencies are commonly preoccupied with policy and underestimate the nature and challenges of the implementation processes at the practice level. These two “worlds” are often ignorant of each other’s subjective reality and thus the quality of the relationships between the two sides is low resulting in a lack of role clarity and ambiguity of expectations (Fullan 2001). This in turn can result in solutions that are worse than the original problems and implementation becomes increasingly difficult. Fullan (2001) suggests that government agencies make an effort in combining “pressure and support” to the practice level in order to stimulate and follow through in achieving more successful implementation (Fullan 2001:87). Darling-Hammond (1998) contends, “Researchers can not hand knowledge to policymakers to enact in new mandates anymore than policymakers can hand new practices to enact in classrooms” (Darling-Hammond 1998:664). Policymakers need to be prepared for the dilemmas of change; acknowledging how difficult and multifaceted these processes are and develop the capacity for new practice by working together with educators to create strategies for professional development that will equip schools with the necessary tools to ensure the desired change (Darling-Hammond 1998).

4.2 Contemporary South African Educational policy

The following is a description and critique of the preliminary actions taken in the process of reforming the South African educational system after 1994. Elements from Fullan’s (1991, 2001) theory on educational reform will also be debated in an attempt to put aspects of this reform process in perspective. This perspective is also on a macro level, and continues the development of a systemic background that will aid in the discussion of overarching conditions for the development of a new professional identity for black South African teachers.

As the seeds of a new democracy began to take root in South Africa in the early 1990’s great efforts were put into educational policy research and analysis, and a multitude of new educational legislation was passed. The following is an attempt to give a brief descriptive overview of the educational transformation processes that took place in South Africa during this time. Due to length constraints, it will not be possible to delve into each aspect of this

process, nor analyse minute details of the educational legislation and policy that was developed at this time. I have chosen to describe the initial attempts made to alter the racially biased and discriminatory educational policies of South Africa, and to follow up with a more detailed description of certain policy instruments that were introduced to aid the implementation of the new legislation.

The National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI) published the *Framework Report* in 1993 stating that South Africa did not have ‘a national core curriculum for all South African schools’ (NEPI 1993:104 cited in Sedibe 1998:271). The education system in South Africa had been described as “racist, Eurocentred, sexist, authoritarian, prescriptive, unchanging, context blind and discriminatory” (Jansen 1999a:4). The system had also been decentralised with 19 educational departments responsible for administering the racially segregated system (Sedibe 1998). With the restructuring that took place after the 1994 elections, South Africa was divided into nine provinces that each had its educational department, and was coordinated by a national Ministry of Education (Sedibe 1998).

The official government framework for the restructuring of the educational system came in February 1995 with the *Education White Paper 1 on Education and Training* (DoE 1995a cited in Sedibe 1998:273). This framework was in line with the then Interim Constitution (1993) and the new South African Constitution (1996) and further enforced the rights stated in the Constitution. These are the rights:

- to basic education
- to equal access to educational institutions;
- to choice of language of instruction where reasonably practicable; and
- to establish educational institutions based on a common culture, language and religion, provided that there should be no discrimination on the grounds of race.

(Sedibe 1998:273)

The *South African Schools Act* was passed by Parliament in 1996 and added to the efforts of dismantling discriminatory policies and legislation. The act confirmed equality of access irrespective of race, gender, language, religion or culture, and made school attendance compulsory between the ages of seven and fifteen (RSA 1996b cited in Sedibe 1998:274).

In line with the new educational legislation in South Africa, several policy instruments were introduced to help with the implementation. In accordance with the basic arguments of this

thesis, I find that the *National Qualifications Framework* (NQF), the *Curriculum 2005*¹⁹ (C2005) and *Norms and Standards for Educators*²⁰ have the greatest relevance in illustrating the fundamental ideas in the overarching structure of educational change in South Africa. These policy instruments have contributed greatly to how South African education is perceived, and thus they have implications for not only policy formulation and structural changes; they also affect the practice level and those who operate in this sphere. The NQF and C2005 will be dealt with and critiqued separately in the following sections, while NSE, will be analysed in the following chapter that deals with the new teacher role in South Africa. I would like to draw the reader's attention to the fact that these policy instruments are based on the same philosophical principals and are therefore theoretically linked. It thus follows that although they are dealt with separately they are nonetheless connected, and that a critique of one implies a critique of the others.

4.2.1 The National Qualifications Framework of South Africa

The NQF was introduced through the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) Act of 1995 (Chisholm 2007). The idea behind a qualifications framework arose out of a context where the need to address unemployment, economic growth and learning was urgent. The aim was to introduce a mechanism that would aid the development of a more egalitarian educational system, and it would serve as a structure for the new and democratic curriculum that was under construction. In addition to this, it aimed at integrating the worlds of education and training²¹ in a superstructure for all educational policy in South Africa. The South African trade union movement borrowed the idea from Canada, England, Scotland and New Zealand; countries with experience from such qualification frameworks from the 1980s²² (Chisholm 2007:297).

¹⁹ C2005 often referred to as Outcomes Based Education (OBE) and vice versa. There exists a certain degree of confusion with regard to defining C2005 and OBE separately. This will be dealt with in section 4.2.2.

²⁰ There exists two versions of Norms and Standards for Educators, one is from 1998 and the other is from 2000 when it was gazette as a national policy act. In Chapter 5 I frequently refer to research conducted by Harley et al. (2000), who employed the version of Norms and Standards for Educators published in 1998. In the analysis in Chapter 5, which compares fieldwork by Harley et al. (2000) and fieldwork conducted by myself, I employ Norms and Standards for Educators from 2000.

²¹ In this text *training* refers to any kind of education culminating in a profession which is not academic.

²² Michael Young (2001) notes that there is not one example of a National Qualifications Framework that has been fully implemented anywhere. One example of this is the NQF in New Zealand (which was used as a model for the South African NQF) which encountered enormous difficulties and has been forced to take many steps backwards from its original idea (Kraak&Young 2001:30).

The NQF emphasises access to and mobility within education, training, and career paths. It also states that a central objective is to “enhance the quality of education and training; to accelerate the redress of past unfair discrimination in education, training and employment opportunities; and to contribute to the full personal development of each learner and the social and economic development of the nation at large” (RSA 1995 cited in Allais 2003:305). This “transformative” instrument was also aiming at integrating education and training by giving learning opportunities to the disadvantaged population of South Africa. A person’s educational status would be judged by its quality and relevance and not by the institution where it had been obtained, so that all learners could progress through the education and training system (Allais 2003:305). In accordance with the 1995 government *White Paper on Education and Training*, the NQF sets out to fulfil its aims of an integrated approach to learning and training which implies

... a view of learning which rejects a rigid division between ‘academic’ and ‘applied’, ‘theory’ and ‘practice’, ‘knowledge’ and ‘skills’, ‘head’ and ‘hand’ (DoE 1995 cited in Ensor 2003:226).

Illustrating this integrated approach, the NQF’s theoretical underpinning emphasises that learning can best be evaluated and assessed through an outcomes-based approach to the curriculum. In practice, this means using a set of units of learning to which are ascribed a number of SAQA credits within certain levels and fields of the NQF. The units of learning are described through performative statements or ‘outcomes’ that represent the learners’ abilities when they have completed the program (Deacon & Parker 1999). These principles will be elaborated on and critiqued in more detail in section 4.2.3, which deals with the educational philosophy that underpins Curriculum 2005 and Outcomes Based Education.

The list of objectives that the NQF was meant to achieve was overwhelming, but not more than the political project of this policy instrument. The NQF was introduced through the education policies and debates within the trade union movement as well as within the broader liberation movement. It seemed to articulate the concerns of organisations across the political spectrum and thus became a point of convergence for many different groups (Allais 2003). Its determination to do away with traditional knowledge boundaries, such as the boundary between education and training, and between academic and everyday knowledge, was meant to eventually erode the social boundaries of race and class. In other words, the transformation project of the NQF was daunting; promising not only greater access and productivity, but also social equity (Ensor 2003). The aims of the NQF resonated with

similar initiatives in other parts of the world and, and according to Ensor (2003) South Africa might have gone further than many in implementing these policies. The need to radically break away from the past allowed South African politicians and educationalist to reconstruct the system of education and training from a very low base, intending to introduce educational policies that were “deemed to be at the cutting edge of international educational reform efforts” (Ensor 2003:326). The policymakers did, however, stumble upon several difficulties along the way, and the NQF together with Curriculum 2005 and other policy instruments have been amended and revised. In Ensor’s (2003) opinion, the reason for this is that the fundamental assumptions upon which these policies were constructed, were not, and are still not, in place in South Africa. The NQF assimilated into the same sphere the entire schooling, industrial training and higher education institutional complex, but as Ensor (2003) points out, education and training are based on different assumptions (Ensor 2007), and thus, a shared and equal approach to the NQF is likely to fail (Ensor 2003). Ensor (2003) also contends that the attempts to revise the NQF are likely to strengthen its incoherence and complexity as its present architecture remains unchanged; in the long run this might lead to a destruction of its legitimacy (Ensor 2003:344).

With Fullan’s (1991, 2001) focal points in mind one might assume that the policy makers behind the NQF did not thoroughly evaluate it with regard to its feasibility and appropriateness. Is it really feasible to attempt to equate the fields of training and education when the natures of these fields differ in such significant ways? And with regard to appropriateness; is the realisation of such a project relatable to practical realities? I believe it is relevant to ask whether a centralised system of education and training is capable of meeting the overwhelming complexity of the South African reality. The need for and wish to create an educational system in South Africa which was equal for all, is quite understandable and more than noble in its intent. However, it may not be the best route out of a system that divided its qualifications according to race, and it is doubtful that such a system will ensure greater participation and consequently democratic practices. Perhaps this is what Fullan (1991) talks about when he warns of change for the sake of change, and change adopted for political symbolical reasons without proper consideration of current realities (Fullan 1991). The need for change in the educational and vocational sector in South Africa was urgent post 1994, however, educational systemic changes such as the creation of the NQF were made at a speed and on a scale, which suggest that more time should have been spent analysing other countries experiences and South Africa’s own reality more critically. Finally, it should be

noted that the NQF's ambition of attaining social equity could be seen as a sign that too much weight was put on the NQF's capacity for democracy development. As Fullan (2001) alerts; educational change is linked to societal change, but it should not be seen as a substitute for the latter (Fullan 1991).

4.2.2 Curriculum 2005 and Outcomes Based Education

In 1997, the Minister of Education in South Africa launched Curriculum 2005 in a public display where 2005 balloons in the colours of the new South African flag, were released. Leading up to this, all schools had been warned that January 1998 was the final date for implementing objectives-based education in all first-grade classrooms (Jansen 1998)²³. There already existed a fair amount of confusion concerning these new educational terms. Jansen (1999a) remarks that the introduction of C2005 was “‘weakly coupled’ to OBE in official documents and discourses”, and that there was “a lack of conceptual connection between the proposal for OBE and the early integration and competency debates” (Jansen 1999a:8, 9). Official documentation does not draw a clear distinction between C2005 and OBE; however, the vision of linked national curricular and learning outcomes is articulated in most official presentations of C2005. The following definition of C2005 was made by the Department of Education:

An OBE curriculum derived from nationally agreed on critical cross field outcomes that sketch our vision of a transformed society and the role education has to play in creating it (DoE 1997 cited in De Waal 2004:44).

OBE can thus be defined as the vehicle, through which the outcomes sketched out in the NQF and C2005 will be realised.

In order to reach a thorough understanding of OBE and its implications in the South African society in general, and in the educational system in particular, it is necessary to give a description of the theoretical underpinnings of the educational terms used, and to say something about which educational philosophy OBE is based on. OBE does not have any single historical legacy, but emanated from two educational reforms in the USA in the late 1960's: mastery learning and competency-based education (Soudien & Baxen 1997). The

²³ The criticism of OBE and C2005 presented here is mainly based on the writings of Professor Jonathan Jansen, as he is recognized as one of the most significant educational academics in South Africa. To a large extent, he has also spearheaded the public debate on OBE and C2005, and is thus acknowledged as an authority within this field. His opinions are largely supported by educational theorists such as Michael Young, Yusuf Sayed, Tansy S. Jessop and Ken L. Harley.

mastery learning movement was initiated by B. Bloom, an American cognitive psychologist, who built his work on the premise that all learners are able to master desired outcomes if educators adjust the time and learning parameters in which learning takes place (Soudien & Baxen 1997:451). The main premise of the competency-based education movement is the integration of outcome goals, instructional experiences, and assessment devices. This approach does, however, remain largely academic and rhetorical, as there is no real agreement as to what the term competency really encompasses (Soudien & Baxen 1997).

The roots of what later came to be called outcomes-based education in South Africa lie with, according to Jansen (1999a), an extremely significant policy document called the *National Training Strategy Initiative* (NTSI), which created the foundation for curriculum and assessment thinking in South Africa (Jansen 1999a). This document was produced in 1994 by the *National Training Board*, which, after having lost the legitimacy among the unions, had managed to secure the full participation and leadership of the *Congress of South African Trade Unions* (COSATU) (Jansen 1999a). The main emphasis of the strategy was on using a so called outcomes-based approach to training in the labour and training sector, but as it proposed an integrated approach to education and training, the entire education sector was bound into this framework of thinking (Jansen 1999a). The subsequent introduction of the NQF is a fitting illustration of this. Adding to the challenge of integrating the two realities of education and training (as described and critiqued in the previous section), the newly established Ministries of Labour and Education did not work together to enhance the possibilities for an integrated approach, causing great frustration with the ‘integrationists’ (Jansen 1999a).

At the time when the NTSI was created, COSATU was involved in an intercourse of ideas with Australia, with the help of Pam Christie, a lecturer at the University of Witwatersrand, who translated the Australian experience into a South African one²⁴. In addition, Dr William Spady from the United States of America contributed greatly to the development of the new outcomes-based approach to education. When outcomes-based education was introduced in Western Australia in the beginning of the 1990’s, the discourse of ideas relied heavily on Spady’s research (Berlach & McNaught 2007). In the South African process, he was used similarly, giving guidance with regard to conceptualisation and implementation, as well as being quoted in much of the official documentation promoting OBE.

²⁴ The debate that ensued from this exchange was primarily conducted within, and focused on the labour movement.

According to Spady, outcomes-based education means focusing and organising everything in an educational system around what is essential for all learners to be able to do successfully at the end of their learning experiences. Spady's theoretical foundation can be broken down into five overarching principles. Firstly, the beginning point of learning is not inputs but outputs, meaning that once the end product of learning has been established, only then can curriculum design be considered. This is referred to as the principle of designing back or designing down (Berlach & McNaught 2007:2). Secondly, schools accept responsibility for deciding how the main outcomes are to be achieved, with teachers acting as curriculum designers. Thirdly, norm-referenced assessment is unfair in that it ranks learners, often on single-test performance, rather than expecting the best of all learners and finding precisely that by using multiple assessments. To facilitate what he terms high expectations, learners ought to be given as many opportunities as required to demonstrate criterion-based success, so as to avoid the need for what amounts to mandated failure. What is traditionally termed failure, Spady would likely refer to it as delayed success (Berlach & McNaught 2007:2). Fourthly, in the task of learning, importance of understanding ought to have precedence over time constraints. In other words, learners should be allowed as much time as they need to exhibit mastery over a particular concept. Finally, the process of learning is as important (if not more important) than the content to be learned. Learning should be enjoyable rather than be, as is often the case, the agent for disenfranchising the learner (Berlach & McNaught 2007:2).

In theory, these principles appear benign and perhaps even educationally efficacious; however, closer examination sheds light on the environment in which they were conceived. Spady's philosophy is constructed in a theoretical, rather than a practical sphere. Thus, it presents overarching imperatives, which do not delineate precisely the practical implications of the theoretical construction. According to Spady, OBE will work as long as the framework is understood and people are empowered to embrace the change (Berlach & McNaught 2007).

Fullan (2001) alerts to the danger of reforms that are theoretically shaped by scholars as their ideas on what needs to be changed and how, often do not coincide with actual needs at the practical level. The result can be that the change suffers from a low level of quality and practicality²⁵, which in turn will have a negative impact on the implementation. Due to an

²⁵ See Fullan's (2001) figure 4.1 in Chapter 4.

excessive focus on the theoretical side of the change, one runs the risk of creating *false clarity*; the change is interpreted in an oversimplified manner and implementation is very likely to fail (Fullan 2001).

4.2.3 C2005 and OBE – A Critique

The theoretical foundation of OBE has received similar criticism both in Australia and in South Africa. The following is a description of how OBE and C2005 were introduced in South Africa and a presentation of a critique in order to show the weaknesses of an educational system based on OBE. The critique aims at providing a more specified insight into the conditions for redefining the professional identities of black South African teachers. It will not include direct and specific implications of this educational legislation's on this group of professionals, as this will be dealt with in detail in Chapter 5. In Chapter 5 the implications from the philosophical underpinning of OBE, as expressed in NSE will be used to analyse fieldwork conducted by Harley et al. (2000) and fieldwork conducted by myself in 2005.

At the heart of Jansen's (1999a, b) critique lies the claim that the OBE policy is driven by political imperatives that have little to do with classroom realities, and that this is likely to "undermine the already fragile learning environment in schools and classrooms in South Africa" (Jansen 1999b:147). This goes straight to what Fullan (2001) regards as a lacking congruence between an outside set of forces (i.e. government bodies, policy makers, official reform administrators) and the practical level (Fullan 2001). When these two worlds are out of touch with each others' realities the outcome of a reform can be worse than the problem it attempted to solve and the above mentioned risk of low quality and practicality, which in turn creates false clarity, is present (Fullan 2001).

In South Africa post 1994 political and educational changes were made with great urgency, aiming to bring South Africa up to speed with the rest of the modern world; intellectually and financially. In this haste, I believe policy makers and others involved in the reform work underestimated the complexity of the South African school realities and lost sight of the individuals that live in this reality, and their histories. When people at the practical level do not experience that a major educational change represents any subjective meaning to them, Fullan (2001) argues that the reformers responsible have neglected the phenomenology of change thus risking a substantial gap between policy and practice (Fullan 2001). When

educators on the practical level attempt to comprehend the initiated change presented in the form of, for example, a new curriculum text, a diversity of obstacles is likely to result. Jansen (1998) criticises the language associated with OBE, remarking that it is very complex, often contradictory, and the educational terms used are constantly under alteration (Jansen 1998). With reference to Fullan (2001), I would argue that this is a direct result of the lacking congruence between theory and practice, idea and reality (Fullan 2001). The result is a lack of meaning and thus confusion for most teachers; the language makes OBE inaccessible to them, and prevents the policy from being meaningful in a classroom context. When an educational reform is perceived as meaningless to the ones that are supposed to put the change into practice, it is difficult to see how the intentions of the attempted change can have any real impact as imperatives and directives that are not understood clearly would be difficult to implement. OBE has received a similar criticism in Australia, where the language has been labelled as “too general, convoluted and jargon-laden to be of much practical value” (Berlach & McNaught 2007:2). According to Spady, the intention of the theory behind OBE is not one of implementation. The apparent problem here is that few OBE ventures have ever been successful. OBE was implemented in several American states, such as Pennsylvania, New York, Minnesota, Oregon and Ohio, and all of them abandoned Spady’s theories after a number of years, as OBE simply did not work in practice (Berlach & McNaught 2007).

While on the topic of language, a point of criticism can also be made with regard to the theoretical roots of the terminology used in C2005 and OBE. Before C2005 and OBE was introduced in South Africa, the term used to describe the instrument, through which training in the labour sector would be provided and accredited, was competencies-based education. The terminology was later changed from competencies to outcomes, and Jansen (1999a) remarks that this change was an attempt to “escape the more obvious behaviourism implied in competencies in favour of the more educationally acceptable outcomes ‘language’” (Jansen 1999a:9). Theoretical terms will always be laden with ascribed meaning derived from the context where they were created, and affected by the background of the theorists who construct them. I argue that it is difficult to see how the term *outcomes* is less behaviouristic in nature than the term *competencies*, although the term competency in this context is taken from an American tradition marked by behaviourism. If anything, competencies refer to the ability to perform a certain task, usually measured against a standard. This definition is at least somewhat open to the fact that more than a technical

ability, but rather a broader set of skills, possibly even normative ones, might be necessary in order to complete a task. In addition, competencies do not rule out the existence of a learning process. Although Spady notes that the learning process is as important as the content to be learned, one can not escape the close association between *outcomes* and *product*. As I see it, the core of the term *outcomes* is solely based on *product*; the way something turns out at the end. It thus implies a sole reliance on the end result and not on the process of reaching it. It also implies that the use of an outcomes-based approach to education might be better suited within the labour and training sector, and possibly less appropriate within the more academic realm of education. South Africa's fairly recent history is one of political activism with a broad appeal; the disadvantaged people of the country were engaged across all levels of society to contribute to the process of reaching democracy, much thanks to the ANC's ability to mobilise. It therefore strikes me as peculiar that the philosophical underpinnings of a new educational policy aiming to rid the system of its discriminatory past is founded upon something which seems to focus more on the end result than of the process of moving towards it. Jansen (1998) also finds it odd that the ANC and its democratically aligned partners organise their policies on a platform of outcomes when their previous political work was founded on the notion of process, and that much of the political and educational struggle of the 1980's valued the process of learning and teaching as ends in themselves (Jansen 1998). In fact, Jansen (1998) goes as far as to suggest that specifying outcomes in advance can be seen as anti-democratic, and that the OBE policy has an instrumentalist view of knowledge. Using knowledge creatively can be seen as contradictory to the fact that the desired learning outcomes have already been specified (Jansen 1998:326).

The South African system of OBE is founded on seven critical outcomes that are based on the South African Constitution, and have been approved by the SAQA. The critical outcomes are overarching and are supported by five developmental outcomes that are supposed to contribute towards the personal development of each learner and towards social and economic development in South Africa. An example of a critical outcome is the ability to "demonstrate an understanding of the world as a set of related systems by recognising that problem-solving contexts do not exist in isolation". An example of a developmental outcome is the ability to "be culturally and aesthetically sensitive across a range of social contexts" (SAQA 1998:5). OBE is further divided into eight integrated learning areas that consist of a large number of specific outcomes. The learning areas have replaced traditional school subjects; instead several subjects are included in one learning area. Also, the reliance on

textbooks has become less and teachers are expected to use a variety of resources in order for the learners to achieve the desired general and specific outcomes (Chisholm 1999).

Jansen (1999a) poses several areas of concern in this regard. When dealing with issues related to assessment, there is a danger that these outcomes will be perceived by teachers to be the ends of education, with the result that teaching will become overly assessment-focused (Jansen 1999a). This, in turn, will likely add to teachers' administrative burden, which will undoubtedly increase as the system of OBE implies continuous assessment. The notion of continuous assessment is meant to encourage a progressive and holistic assessment of learners, however, a study conducted at high schools in Kwa Zulu Natal, showed that the result in practice was assessing continuously creating more work for the already strained teachers (Lucen et al. 1997 cited in Jansen 1999a:148). I argue that this is a typical example of what Fullan (2001) would refer to as false clarity (Fullan 2001). In this study, the teachers did not interpret the assessment demands of OBE in the intended way and the result was an overload of unnecessary assessment work that hinders the original and actual purpose of 'continuous assessment'.

Another problem related to the issue of outcomes is OBE's aim of moving away from a content focused curriculum. Seen as a counterweight to the previous content heavy and non-reflective South African curriculum, this appears to be a move in the right direction. Kraak and Young (2001) notes, however, that C2005 may have based its rejection of the principles of a subject based curriculum more on its political associations with the divisive apartheid curriculum and its narrow and highly prescriptive content than on a more critical examination of alternative curriculum principles (Kraak & Young 2001:34).

An additional area of concern according to Jansen (1999a) is that the outcomes formulated in OBE are vague and general. Jansen (1999a) contends that content is crucial in giving meaning to a set of outcomes, and the fact that certain OBE outcomes are so general and vague in their formulation poses the risk of the outcomes being filled with a content, which is discriminatory. Jansen (1999a) puts it this way:

A fixation with outcomes could easily lead to serious losses with respect to building a multicultural curriculum, which both moves beyond ethnicity while simultaneously engaging with the historicity of such concepts and ideals in the context of apartheid South Africa (Jansen 1999a:152).

This leads us to consider the issue of values in the curriculum. According to Jansen (1999a), the OBE outcomes are so general and approximate in their articulation that they “could have been written for Hawaii or Buenos Aires or Western Nigeria” (Jansen 1999a:151). The outcomes are not specific for the South African situation and so, they are likely to make little difference in a society, which is moving away from its discriminatory past of colonialism and apartheid. Furthermore, it is essential to acknowledge that the complexity of the South African society requires that the outcomes that inform all learning in the country are translatable into the context where they will be applied.

In the South African education system, OBE is likely to fail because not only is it difficult to implement in practice, but it is also based on wrongful assumptions about the situation in South African schools (Jansen 1998). The theory behind OBE suggests that teachers in general possess the necessary qualities to make sense of this practice. OBE requires that the teacher inhabits not only the application of a skill, but also a thorough understanding of its theoretical underpinnings, as well as the ability to put this into practice in differing contexts (Jansen 1998). Unfortunately, the situation in South African classrooms do not allow for this to happen, as most of the schools suffer from teacher shortages, a lack of teaching materials, crowded classrooms, and learners who live under socially and physically straining conditions. The policy makers’ idea that teachers in South Africa should be capable of implementing a new curriculum employing teaching methods that are unfamiliar to them can clearly be seen as another sign of the lack of congruence between the world of policy formulation and the practical world of schooling in South Africa. Adding to the problem of implementing OBE is the fact that teachers in general do not understand it. The teachers of South Africa have had limited access to the process of constructing the OBE policy, and very few have access to information on OBE, or do not understand its implications where such information is available (Jansen 1999a). The process leading up to the introduction of OBE was secluded and only a selected elite of teachers (often expert and white) were included in the process. Teachers in general received little or no training and thus they were forced into an undesirable strategy of ‘make it up as you go along’ (Jansen 1999a). Fullan (1991) alerts to the dangers of reforms that are strongly influenced by scholars and politicians, stating that the ones responsible for the change might assume that it is objectively good and that the only problems one might encounter are of a practical nature (Fullan 1991). It is quite clear, however, that much more than challenges with regard to practicality were at stake in the South African reform situation. Generally, the criticism presented here by Jansen (1999a, b)

resonates well with Fullan's (1991, 2001) deliberation on factors that obstruct the success of educational reforms. At the base of Fullan's (1991, 2001) theory is the conception that a strong connection between policy and practice is a necessity in order for an attempted change to have the desired effect. Furthermore, he lists factors that must be present if a reform is to be successful; the use of new teaching materials, the use of new teaching approaches and the alteration of beliefs (Fullan 2001:39). In South Africa, ambitious attempts were made to ensure that these components were present, however, the speed with which the reform was made and the lack of a conceptual connection between the level of theory and the level of practice resulted in problems with regard to these components. The policy makers and reform administrators did not take the time to perform a sound contextual analysis of the South African school reality and thus the teaching material, which was constructed, and the new teaching approaches that teachers were required to employ were not suited to the reality in which they were meant to be implemented. As stressed several times in relation to factors that contribute to the success of an educational change, the creation of meaning is crucial if the intended change is going to have an impact. When new teaching material and suggested teaching approaches do not make sense to teachers one can hardly expect them to make use of them in a way that promotes learning. Most importantly, however, in determining why OBE has been so intractable, is the component related to the alteration of beliefs. This goes to the core of what Fullan (1991, 2001) addresses in discussing whether or not an intended change is experienced as meaningful by those affected, and it also corresponds with Jansen's (1999a, b) assumptions on why OBE will fail in South Africa (Fullan 1991, 2001; Jansen 1999a, b). The alteration of beliefs is something, which requires a holistic approach to the person whose beliefs are to be altered. It involves abandoning what was once considered true and right, and replacing it with alternative guidelines for behaviour and thought. In order for this process to take place, the "new beliefs" must carry meaning to the ones who are internalising them, and there must be set aside the necessary time and resources. As already noted, the educational changes that took place in South Africa proceeded without a proper analysis of the school reality and were conducted with such haste that it resulted in meaninglessness for educators on the practical level. A more serious effect of this haste and lack of reality orientation was that on top of experiencing meaninglessness teachers were expected to alter their beliefs about teaching without the resources and time necessary to aid in this process.

A more in-depth deliberation on the implications of South African educational policy for teachers in South Africa will be presented in the following chapter, using the policy instrument Norms and standards for Educators, which is based on the same philosophical and theoretical principles as OBE.

Generally, the criticism against OBE regarding its theoretical foundation and attempted implementation revolves around the principles deliberated on above. However, I find it necessary to remark that there are voices in this debate that present alternative perspectives on OBE. Malan (2000) states that there are many positive aspects of OBE, noting that it brings about a national focus on education as a means to an end and not an end in itself, and that it introduces strategic educational planning aiming at achieving results, as opposed to the rote learning that prevailed during the time of apartheid rule (Malan 2000:28). Other defenders of OBE reward its focus on procedural knowledge²⁶ stressing that for learners to acquire demonstrable skills is exactly what is needed to ensure South Africa's economic competitiveness in a global society (Mason 1999).

I find that most of the positive commentaries on OBE come from a very theoretical and philosophical view point. The intentions of OBE are emphasised and issues of implementation are largely overlooked, except for the presentation of overarching principles on the necessity of taking certain quality assuring measures in order for the reform to be successful. The new educational model represented by C2005 and OBE deserves credit for its radical break from its discriminatory predecessor. However, a sound theoretical superstructure and transformational approach is not enough to ensure that noble intentions are actually transformed into successful practice. In addition, the fact that the new educational system is not based on race discrimination and clearly intends to aid in the democratisation of South Africa does not vouch for its quality and success. Jansen (1999a) concludes his critique by contending that OBE can only survive with “an entire re-engineering of the education system” (Jansen 1999a:152). Teachers must be trained and re-trained, principals must be retrained and assisted in the implementation, assessment forms must be radically altered, time must be set aside for managing this process in each school, and parental support and involvement must be ensured, and the entire process must be continuously monitored and evaluated (Jansen 1999a:153).

²⁶ Ryle (1971) distinguishes between procedural knowledge or *knowledge how* (associated with skills) and propositional knowledge, or *knowledge that* (associated with facts or content) (Ryle 1971 cited in Mason 1999:141).

As an end comment to this criticism of OBE, largely presented by Jansen (1999a, b), it should be mentioned that C2005 underwent a revision from 2000 until 2002. The revision was undertaken by a *Ministerial Review Committee*, which recommended a major revision of the curriculum in order to make it more understandable in the classroom. The Review Committee produced a document called the *Revised National Curriculum Statement* (RNCS) which became policy in 2002. The RNCS suggested that the revised curriculum structure would be supported by changes in teacher orientation and training, learning support materials and the organisation, resourcing and staffing of curriculum structures and functions in national and provincial education departments. It would also promote conceptual coherence, have a clear structure and be written in clear language, and design and promote “the values of a society striving towards social justice, equity and development through the development of creative, critical and problem-solving individuals” (Chisholm et al. 2000 cited in Chisholm 2003:4). According to Msila (2007), the RNCS also opens up for the introduction of African indigenous knowledge systems (AIKS) into the educational system of South Africa. African indigenous knowledge, whether institutionalised or not, carry implications for democratisation and nation-building, and so the purpose of introducing AIKS is to further the indigenisation of education in South Africa, making it more “African” and not locked to its Eurocentric past (Msila 2007:155). Msila (2007) is not the first to remark that C2005 and OBE are too closely associated with the cultural and societal script of the West. Nekhwevha (1999) quotes Banteyerga (1994), who criticises so called modern education in Africa, claiming that it does not meet the needs and aspirations of the African people, and thus does not boost material growth and spiritual development²⁷:

“African wisdom and knowledge is being systematically undermined: African self-concept and pride; African understanding and interpretation of the environment; and all in all the culture and psychological make-up of the African” (Banteyerga 1994:1, 2 cited in Nekhwevha 1999:493).

²⁷ This point will be deliberated further in section 5.4.

5. EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY - A MICRO PERSPECTIVE

Education is never a neutral enterprise; it is closely linked with identity formation and is at its core a political act that is greatly affected by life outside the classroom. Legislators and those who formulate educational policies always have certain political, social or cultural goals in mind, and in the case of South Africa, apartheid education was used as a tool to ensure the supremacy of one race over another enhancing the divisions of society and constructing the learners' identities according to the colour of their skin (Msila 2007). The hidden and explicit curricula were constructed to produce, reproduce and validate separation and discrimination based on the notion of European superiority and African inferiority (Soudien & Baxen 1999). The system of teacher education created teachers with no professional autonomy; "their authority and curricular competence were undermined and thus resulted in a lacking ability to understand the relationship between education and the context in which knowledge and understanding are created and shared" (Soudien & Baxen 1999:132). This left teachers without the intellectual resources to reflect critically on their own practice, and on the system, they were operating within. With the comprehensive educational reform in South Africa after 1994 the educational system underwent, and is still undergoing, great changes. According to the critique of South African educational policy post 1994, and in spite of the Revised National Curriculum Statement, there are still major challenges when it comes to teachers' conditions in South African schools. The following aims to serve as a theoretical introduction and discussion (research question B) in order to enable an analysis of these conditions in a micro perspective (research questions C and D).

5.1 Professionalism and Identity – a clarification of terms

There exists a vast amount of theoretical discourse where the terms identity and professionalism are linked in various ways, and in connection to a broad set of factors such as history, life history, culture, race, gender, educational expertise and so forth²⁸. Little research has been conducted using *professional identity* as combined terms, and the research attempts that have been undertaken lack a clear definition of the concept (Beijaard et al. 2000). This might be because the concept of professional identity will vary greatly according

²⁸ For further reading see Sachs (2001), Edmondson and Nkomo (2001), Beijaard et al. (2000) and Ball and Goodson (1985).

to which profession is in question, as well as the definition of identity one chooses to apply. In my opinion, the terms *identity* and *professionalism* are closely linked and to a great extent imbricate each other, and although the research material from this field is limited, I argue that in the South African context, an analysis of black teachers is best served by uniting the two terms and thus discussing *professional identity* as a unified concept. Due to the aforementioned multiplicity of discourses on the subject, however, I see it as necessary to present a brief description of which theoretical background I ascribe to the combined terms, so as not to create confusion for the reader. This is significant as it serves to explain both *why* I have chosen to combine the terms *professionalism* and *identity*, but also to clarify *how* the concept will be applied.

The theoretical deliberation on professionalism will be based on Hoyle's (1980) terms, extended and restricted professionalism. Restricted professionalism refers to teachers whose thinking and practice is narrowly classroom based, rooted in experience rather than theory, and strictly focused on the academic programme. Extended professionalism refers to teachers who locate their work in a broader educational context, and who systematically evaluate their work to improve it based on research and development (Hoyle 1980 cited in Harley et al. 2000). I would like to add to the definition of extended professionalism a quote from Carr and Kemmis (1986), which further describes the professional teacher as someone who

... plans thoughtfully , acts deliberately, observes the consequences of action systematically, and reflects critically on the situational constraints and practical potential of the strategic action being considered, he or she will also construct opportunities to carry this private discourse into discussion and debate with others – teachers, students, administrators and the school community. In so doing, he or she helps to establish critical communities of enquirers into teaching... (Carr & Kemmis 1986 cited in Møller 1999:499).

The theoretical field relating to concepts of identity is possibly even more comprehensive than that of professionalism; it covers several scientific disciplines and ranges from the micro to the macro levels of society.

In order to narrow this down sufficiently, and with the South African context as a backdrop, I see it as useful to apply a collective notion of identity, as opposed to one, which is strictly individual and centred around an individual's sense of self. Identity can generally be defined as who or what someone is, the various meanings people can attach to themselves, or the meanings attributed by others (Beijaard 1995). The concept of collective identity addresses

the “we-ness” of a group, stressing the similarities around which group members coalesce (Cerulo 1997:386). In early literature a collective’s members were believed to internalise these similar attributes, suggesting a unified, singular social experience within which social actors constructed a sense of self (Cerulo 1997). Recent theory, however, leans more towards a social constructivist perspective where members of a group construct their identities based on a collective self. From this perspective, every collective becomes an entity in constant change in accord with reigning cultural scripts and centres of power (Cerulo, 1997:387). In the past, the different population groups of South Africa had their identities ascribed to them by the apartheid authorities. This has had a profound effect on these groups’ collective identities, and naturally also on the individual identities of the members of each population group. In this context, however, it is most relevant to discuss the issues of a collective identity as the focus of this study is on black South African teachers and not on certain individuals of this group. I would, however, like to stress, that this is stated with an underlying acknowledgement of the fact that all groups consists of individuals.

In order to fully grasp how and why I have chosen to link the concepts of professionalism and identity, I encourage the reader to keep in mind that the black teachers of South Africa can not simply be seen as professionals who have had to undergo drastic changes in their professional lives. They are individuals who for years struggled in a system that denied them their basic civil rights as members of a society, and consequently the changes that took place in South Africa after 1994 has had a profound effect on their lives as a whole. In this perspective the educational reform in South Africa acquired enormous symbolic power, which in turn converted the educational changes into much more than a mere restructuring of content and teaching methods. These changes became a symbol of both personal and professional emancipation, and thus, one can not separate black South African teachers’ professional identity from their personal identity as they have been inextricably linked together through this process. In other words, the personal stories of these teachers’ lives should be kept in mind when analysing the professional aspect of their identities. Goodson (1981) exemplifies this by stating that:

In understanding something so intensely personal as teaching, it is critical we know about the person the teacher is (Goodson 1981:69 cited in Goodson & Sikes 2001:57).

In this regard another significant factor should be mentioned, which I believe, binds these teachers’ professional and personal identities together; the concept of *Ubuntu*. According to

South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Ubuntu is very difficult to render into a Western language; it is a cultural world-view that tries to capture the essence of what it means to be human. Tutu (1999) explains:

We say, “A person is a person through other people”... I am human because I belong, I participate, and I share... We belong in a bundle of life... A person with Ubuntu has a proper self assurance that comes with knowing that he or she belongs in a greater whole and is diminished when others are humiliated or diminished... It means that my humanity is caught up, is inextricably bound up, in theirs (Murithi 2006:28).

The 1997 South African Governmental White Paper on Social Welfare officially recognises Ubuntu as

... the principle of caring for each other’s well-being...and a spirit of mutual support...Each individual’s humanity is ideally expressed through his or her relationship with others and theirs in turn through a recognition of the individual’s humanity. Ubuntu means that people are people through other people. It also acknowledges both the rights and the responsibilities of every citizen in promoting individual and societal well-being. (DoW 1997:Chapter 2, section 24).

According to Ubuntu community is ontologically prior to persons, and “as a ‘human being through other human beings’, it follows that what we do to others “feeds through the interwoven fabric of social, economic and political relationships to eventually impact upon us as well” (Murithi 2006:29)²⁹. This contributes essentially to the perspective on the role of black South African teachers, as they are culturally obliged to have Ubuntu in their daily interaction with learners and colleagues. Consequently, I believe that a discussion on, and an analysis of, black South African teachers’ identity and professionalism, should include not only the type of professionalism they practice, but also the emancipatory history of the country, the harsh social realities that one finds at most underprivileged schools, and a knowledge of how the imperatives of Ubuntu impact these teachers’ lives.

In summary, the attempted definition of the concept of professional identity encompasses a range of reflections and assumptions that are necessary to keep in mind when trying to understand the multifaceted reality of black South African teachers. The concept of

²⁹ In order to provide sufficient insight into the concept of Ubuntu I would like to remark how this was an essential aspect of the idea behind the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. According to Ubuntu, even supporters of apartheid were victims in this system that they benefited from, socially and financially, because it “distorted their view of their relationship with other human beings, which then impacted upon their own sense of security and freedom from fear” (Murithi 2006:29). As Tutu (1999) observed during the TRC hearings, “in the process of dehumanizing another, in inflicting untold harm and suffering, the perpetrator was inexorably being dehumanized as well” (Tutu 1999 cited in Murithi 2006:29).

professional identity as described here includes a notion of collectiveness, the imperatives of Ubuntu, the attempted reflectiveness of extended professionalism, all wrapped up in the cultural, historical and educational context of South Africa.

In the following sections, I will move closer to the practical realm of the black South African teachers' reality and see what happens when policy expectations meet the reality of South African classrooms. On this basis, I will take a closer look at the reality of black South African teachers and attempt to answer the initial research questions by presenting a tentatively realistic description of their professional identities, applying the concept of professional identity as described here.

5.2 The New South African Teacher

The process of creating a new, democratic and non-discriminatory educational system in South Africa, with its inherent challenges and obstacles, has been described in the previous chapter. In the following the issues of how the educational reform in South Africa and black teachers' professional identity in this context are linked, will be explored (research questions C and D).

I will look at how policy expectations meet the reality of South African schools by comparing Norms and Standards for Educators with fieldwork conducted by Harley et al. (2000) and fieldwork conducted by myself in 2005. In this context, I will present a deliberation on how black South African teachers' professional identities are affected as they attempt to redefine themselves in accordance with the new educational system, and tentatively implement new educational policy. I would like to remind the reader that Norms and Standards for Educators is connected philosophically and theoretically to the policy instruments described and debated in section 4.2, and in criticising Norms and Standards for Educators it follows that this also applies to the other policy documents.

Educational change is often met with scepticism and/or opposition amongst teachers. It is a well documented fact that teachers in a majority of instances struggle to accept educational reform initiatives (Fullan & Hargreaves 1998). Fullan (2001) states that most reform strategies focus on the structural and bureaucratic side of educational change, and do not pay attention to existing cultures and the fact that values and practices might have to undergo deep changes (Fullan 2001).

In South Africa in the early 1990's educational changes were made at high speed and the educational structures were altered with less attention being paid to actual school realities, or the realities of teachers in the country. Interestingly the reform initiatives did not meet aggressive resistance amongst teachers; for the most part, they were positive and accepting of the new changes. The problem has rather been confusion with regard to implementation (Soudien & Baxen 1997)³⁰. Achieving actual educational change depends entirely upon what teachers do and think and thus it will always fail until infrastructures and processes are developed that aid teachers in reaching new understandings (Fullan 2001). The apparent lack of such infrastructures and processes has been a crucial element in the criticism against the new educational legislation in South Africa.

In 1994, the *Committee on Teacher Education Policy* (COTEP) was appointed and produced a report that formulated norms and standards for teacher education (DoE 1997a cited in Sedibe 1998:275). The report suggested moving away from an input- and product-based curriculum and towards a process- and competence-based curriculum, more in line with current global educational trends. Whereas education under apartheid encouraged teacher conservatism and conformity, the new curriculum legislation sought to increase teacher autonomy and professional discretion (Harley et al. 2000). This is reflected in both the NQF and the Curriculum 2005, where seven generic “essential” outcomes inform all teaching and learning, and are supposed to permeate specific outcomes at every level of the NQF. C2005 was developed to produce citizens with a high level of skills, a high level of knowledge, and the attitudes and values needed to rebuild the country and to place South Africa on the path to competitive participation in a global economy. Norms and Standards for Educators is also perfectly in line with the novel ideas of educational enterprise, and outlines seven complex roles that teachers in the new South Africa are supposed to play. Central to these roles is that teachers who previously taught on the basis of subject disciplines are now required to develop competence to teach learning areas, as well as give effect to a learner-centred approach in which the teacher is expected to become a facilitator of learning rather than the

³⁰ It should be remarked that Vandeyar and Killen (2003) state that C2005 and OBE was met with a certain amount of resistance from teachers (Vandeyar&Killen, 2003). I believe this observation is correct as it refers to a resistance towards the reform after teachers had experienced its attempted implementation and thus encountered its inherent practical obstacles. South African teachers in general were naturally positive towards an educational reform post 1994 as it was essential for the country to make a break with its discriminatory past and move towards democracy, however, after experiencing difficulties with implementation as well as several revisions of an already complex and complicated curriculum, teachers might be experiencing what Fullan (2001) refers to as innovation overload (Fullan, 2001). The result of innovation overload will be that teachers do not embrace the change, they will adopt simplistic methods of implementing official directives and as a result of not acknowledging the need for change, it will ultimately fail (Fullan (2001).

sole repository of knowledge (DoE 1997b:8 cited in De Waal 2004:43). This transition from a restricted type of professionalism, to an extended type of professionalism will be discussed in the following.

In 2000, Harley et al. reviewed South African policy governing teacher roles and competences, and conducted empirical fieldwork³¹ in which teachers' practice was compared with policy expectation. In the following, the roles outlined in Norms and Standards for Educators will be looked at in relation to the fieldwork conducted by Harley et al. (2000). These research results will be compared to my findings at Qinqa Mntwana P.S. in 2005. I will also discuss challenges, which arise when the expectations to the new South African teacher meet the current realities of South African classrooms. The objective of this comparison and discussion is to describe and analyse the professional identity of black³² South African teachers. In the analysis of their fieldwork, Harley et al. (2000) do not mention identity or professional identity. Rather they employ the terms *restricted* and *extended professionalism* to describe the type of professionalism, which characterised the teachers that took part in the research program. The focus for this thesis includes this definition of professionalism as part of the concept of professional identity, which has been described in 5.1.1. The analysis will thus include a deliberation on the type of professionalism found in both the study of Harley et al. (2000) and the study conducted by me at Qinqa Mntwana P.S., as well as a discussion on the professional identity of black South African teachers based on these studies. As a final remark, I find it significant to comment that in the analysis of teacher professionalism based on the above mentioned studies, it is central to evaluate whether or not the conditions for the teachers in question allow for extended professional practice. I see this as a crucial part of the analysis as one can not expect extended professional practice if the circumstances do not allow for it. In the analysis of aspects of the teachers' professional identity with regard to professionalism, their

³¹ The fieldwork was undertaken by the *School of Education, Training and Development* at the University of Natal, and was a project of the *President's Education Initiative* (Harley et al. 2000:291). The fieldwork was conducted at a cross section of six state schools in the province of KwaZulu-Natal, where a number of selected teachers participated in the research program. The schools chose out a number of so called "effective" teachers who were prepared to participate in the research program. The decision to use "effective" teachers was based on the reasoning that very little would be learnt from dysfunctional teachers (Harley et al. 2000:290). It is recognized by Harley et al. that this decision has implications for the interpretation of research results, and that the analysis is necessarily generalized (Harley et al. 2000).

³² This thesis is focused on the professional identity of *black* South African teachers. There is no mention of race in the study of Harley et al., but it is stated that "the [research] sample was drawn from a historically and geographically representative range of schools" (Harley et al. 2000:299). This implies that the schools that participated in their research program consisted for the most part of a black population as black people constitute 84.3% of the South African population (Statistics South Africa 2005:24).

practice will be matched to criteria for either extended or restricted professionalism. Presenting conclusive findings, however, is something I believe to be scientifically unattainable as teachers' working conditions might not provide solid grounds for such an analysis, and as the research material from the study of Harley et al. (2000) and my own material is far too limited. It is my belief, however, that the findings presented below give an insight into aspects of black South African teachers' professional identities and their working conditions, although this insight might not be as extensive as desired.

5.2.1 Expectations meet reality

Norms and Standards for Educators³³ outlines seven roles that all educators are expected to play. They are as follows:

- Learning mediator
- Community, citizenship and pastoral role
- Interpreter and designer of learning programmes
- Leader, administrator and manager
- Scholar, researcher and lifelong learner
- Assessor³⁴
- Learning area/phase specialist³⁵

(DoE 2000:13, 14)

Each role is defined in terms of *foundational, practical and reflexive competences*. Practical competence is “the demonstrated ability, in an authentic context, to consider a range of possibilities for action, make considered decisions... and perform the action chosen” (DoE 2000:10). This competence is grounded in foundational competence, which is a demonstrated “understanding of the knowledge and thinking which underpins actions taken”

³³ I would like to remind the reader that Harley et al. based their research on an earlier version of this document from 1998. In Harley et al. (2000) it is referred to as both *Norms and Standards for Educators* and as *Norms and standards for Teacher Educators*. I have employed the revised version from 2000, when it was gazetted as a national policy act. It is called *Norms and Standards for Educators* and will be used as basis for the analysis and discussion as it does not differ significantly from the 1998 version.

³⁴ The research conducted by Harley et al. (2000) based on the earlier *Norms and Standards for Teacher Educators* document from 1998 contained six roles; all of the above mentioned roles, except for the role of assessor. Although the *Norms and Standards* document from 2000, which I have used includes this role, it will not be included in this thesis as it was not evaluated in either Harley et al.'s or my own research.

³⁵ The role of learning area/phase specialist is seen as an overarching role into which the other roles are integrated, and in which competence is ultimately assessed. As there is no mention of this in Harley et al.'s text I presume that Harley et al. (2000) have not paid particular attention to this role in their research. As it has not been covered in my research either it follows that this role will not be dealt with in this thesis.

(DoE 2000:10). The ability to integrate the above two competences in order to reflect more critically on both is referred to as Reflexive competence. This competence develops the ability to “adapt to change and unforeseen circumstances, and explain the reasons behind these adaptations” (DoE 2000:10). *Applied competence* is the overarching term for these three interconnected kinds of competence (DoE 2000). An educator in possession of applied competence is a “self-directed, well-informed and highly-skilled professional with a strong sense of ethics and accountability, who is constantly reflecting on and developing her practice” (Harley et al. 2000:292). These criteria match Hoyle’s (1980) criteria of a teacher with extended professionalism. In the following deliberations, the term *applied competence* will therefore be seen as part of the term extended professionalism, and thus not be applied separately, unless there is a specific reason to do so.

The Norms and Standards for Educators document and three other policy documents³⁶ constitute a coherent and consistent regulatory and developmental system for educators. Collectively, the documents “firmly uphold the democratic and human rights principles enshrined in the Constitution, while in other matters, they provide a fair degree of flexibility and sensitivity to different contexts” (Harley et al. 2000:291). In short, they provide a clear ideological shift from the non-democratic apartheid system of education to a new democratic system, and shows with great clarity a move away from a restricted to the extended type of professionalism expected of educators in the new South Africa.

The research report produced from the research program carried out by Harley et al. (2000) is comprehensive. The five roles that were analysed comprises 104 different competencies³⁷, thus due to constraints in time and space the following analysis will be dealt with in general terms.

I. Learning mediator:

³⁶ 1. National Department of Education: Duties and Responsibilities of Educators; 2. South African Council of Educators (SACE): Code of Conduct; 3. Education Labour Relations Council: Manual for Developmental Appraisal.

³⁷ These competences include all the practical, foundational and reflexive competences that belong to each of the roles as described in the Norms and Standards for Educators document from 2000. There may be a slight discrepancy of competences between the document from 1998, which is the background for the study of Harley et al. (2000), and the one from 2000, which I have based my analysis on. I do believe, however, that this potential discrepancy is of no great significance to the outcome of either Harley et al.’s (2000) or my own conclusions.

The educator will mediate learning in a manner which is sensitive to the diverse needs of learners, including those with barriers to learning; construct learning environments that are appropriately contextualised and inspirational; communicate effectively showing recognition of and respect for the differences of others. In addition, an educator will demonstrate sound knowledge of subject content and various principles, strategies and resources appropriate to teaching in a South African context (DoE 2000:13).

All the teachers that participated in the research program of Harley et al. (2000) demonstrated a thorough knowledge of content and prepared well for their lessons (Harley et al. 2000). As I did not observe in the classrooms during my research at Qinqa Mntwana P.S I can not conclude in any way on this aspect, but in most of the interviews teachers underlined that they spent much time preparing for lessons and doing assessment work. Teachers in the research program of Harley et al. (2000) generally scored high in the role of learning mediator. However, the competence in which teachers are expected to “create a learning environment in which critical and creative thinking is encouraged” (DoE 2000:15) was not very prominent (Harley et al. 2000:295). et al. (2000) point out that the teachers who believe knowledge to be given, a-historical and uncontested will most likely see their role solely as transmitters of content and thus will not recognise learners’ own experiences as worthwhile contributions. In this way, they close off opportunities to develop a creative and critical learning culture (Harley et al., 2000). In relation to black teachers’ professional identity, this aspect of teacher practice can be analysed with regard to Hoyle’s (1980) criteria for professionalism. I argue that the above mentioned perspective on teaching and learning corresponds with a restricted type of professionalism as thinking and practice is narrowly classroom based and the focus is strictly on the academic program and not on developing creative communities (Hoyle 1980 cited in Harley et al. 2000:292).

Harley et al. (2000) also report that teachers often feel caught between policy values and the values of the community. One teacher comments:

The new policy is good but there will be conflict between the government and the Zulu rural community. If children become more critical they will start to question their parents’ authority and adopt values that conflict with their community (Harley et al. 2000:296).

Teachers’ lacking ability or wish to develop a learning environment, which promotes creative and critical thinking, might be traced back to the teacher education that they underwent before 1994. As previously mentioned, this education, developed during

apartheid, did not instil in them either professional autonomy or the means to critically reflect on their own practice and to develop as professionals (Soudien & Baxen 1999). The criticism against the educational reform in South Africa post 1994, has stressed that a serious flaw in the reform process is the apparent gap between policy intentions and the practical realities of South African schools (Jansen 1999a, b). Policy has been accused of failing to capture the nature of this reality, and based on this one can assume that part of this heritage still remains in the teacher education and the school system of South Africa. Also, teachers and school administrators have received little or no training in implementing the new curriculum, and becoming familiar with the new and demanding teacher role. This clearly presents challenges when it comes to teachers' professional identity for when a teacher's skill of critical reflection is not developed, how then can she be expected to act with extended professionalism? Moreover, how can she come to be in possession of the necessary tools of reflection to analyse her professional role in a greater context so as to lighten the burden of adjusting to drastic changes in her professional circumstances? Teachers of South Africa, and especially black teachers, have had to undergo, and are undergoing, a comprehensive professional transformation in which the old teacher role is being drastically changed. Thus, it is my opinion that an evaluation of teachers' professional practice should be seen in light of the fact that most black South African teachers are to a certain extent limited in their professional practice and development by external factors that they are not in control over. As mentioned above, this should be kept in mind when assessing which type of professionalism is practiced by teachers in these studies.

Harley et al. (2000) found little evidence of the use of formative assessment and teacher's sensitivity to the needs of the individual learner (Harley et al. 2000). The interviews in my research at Qinqa Mntwana P.S. did not focus specifically on forms of assessment, but with regard to sensitivity to learners needs they displayed a great concern for, and interest in their learners' individual needs. This is exemplified from quotes from two teachers below:

... looking at the demands and needs of our learners I don't see it as an extra job. These things go together; to teach a child you must be involved in its life, know exactly how he is. Before the lesson starts I must find out how the pupils are. I ask: "What did you eat last night, and what did you eat this morning?" Or I have a moral lesson to prepare them for the lesson. You can't just zoom in; you must prepare the ground (Interview, T1 2005).

... a naughty child you must put next to you, not at the back of the class. Then they will change...or a child who is a slow learner I put him next to me, I always monitor and encourage (Interview, T5 2005).

I would like to point out that a learner's needs will often be a complex phenomenon that is not solely based on the learner's ability or inability to comprehend the subjects she are being taught, but is also largely dependent on the learner's social and emotional welfare. In Norms and Standards for Educators, the role of learning mediator does not specifically define "the diverse needs of learners"; however, the competences that comprise this role are largely centred on cognitive rather than social and emotional needs. It is a sad fact that learners in most underprivileged areas of South Africa have dire and unmet social, physical and emotional needs, which require attention before other and more cognitive learning difficulties can be addressed. For this reason, when addressing learner's needs with regard to the role of learning mediator, it is my opinion that this aspect should be looked in relation to the role labelled community, citizenship and pastoral role. This role encompasses the aforementioned social and emotional aspect that does not seem to be covered by the role of learning mediator. I underline that this focus is especially significant when dealing with teachers and learners in the underprivileged parts of South Africa.

II. Community, citizenship and pastoral role:

The educator will practise and promote a critical, committed and ethical attitude towards developing a sense of respect and responsibility towards others. The educator will uphold the constitution and promote democratic values and practices in schools and society. Within the school, the educator will demonstrate an ability to develop a supportive and empowering environment for the learner and respond to the educational and other needs of learners and fellow educators. Furthermore, the educator will develop supportive relations with parents and other key persons and organisations based on a critical understanding of community and environmental development issues. One critical dimension of this role is HIV/AIDS education. (DoE 2000:14).

HIV/AIDS awareness - teachers' value systems at odds with policy expectations

According to Norms and Standards for Educators, a teacher is required to act as mentor for the learners and to "understand the impact of abuse at individual, familial and community levels" (DoE 2000:19). This competence is related to the competence which concerns counselling and can also be seen as closely linked to one where the teacher is required to respond to current social and educational problems with particular emphasis on the issues of violence, drug abuse, poverty, child and woman abuse, HIV/AIDS and environmental

degradation (DoE 2000:18, 19). Sadly, all of these factors exist to some extent in most underprivileged communities in South Africa, and the community surrounding Qinqa Mntwana P.S is no exception. Due to obvious time and space constraints, it will not be possible to delve into each of the above problem areas to evaluate how the teachers at Qinqa Mntwana P.S deal with them in their work as teachers. However, as the AIDS pandemic is probably the most daunting challenge that South Africa is faced with, and one that affects nearly all South Africans in some way, I will briefly describe and deliberate on how teachers at Qinqa Mntwana P.S. deal with the issues of HIV and AIDS.

It is estimated that 1,577,200 South African children aged 0-17 years are directly affected by HIV and AIDS through circumstances such as HIV infection at birth or through sex (DoH 2005). One of South Africa's greatest challenges in this regard is the enormous stigma that comes with being either HIV positive or having developed AIDS. Due to this, many live with the infection for years without disclosing their status, and thus infect others. Sadly, those who do disclose their status are to a large extent subject to discrimination, both social and professional. This is especially tragic for children who live with the HIV, as they are emotionally and socially more vulnerable than adults, who will often be aware of risk behaviour. Children have usually contracted HIV from the mother during birth, or through sexual abuse. According to research, stigma and discrimination relating to HIV/AIDS undermine public health efforts to combat the epidemic (Malcolm et al. 1998; UNAIDS 2000; UNAIDS 2002 cited in Brown et al., 2003:49). This results in negative preventive behaviours, HIV test-seeking behaviour, care-seeking behaviour on diagnosis, quality of care provided to HIV-positive patients, and perception and treatment of persons living with HIV/AIDS by communities, families, and partners (Gerbert et al. 1991 cited in Brown et al. 2003:49).

HIV and AIDS education is not only part of the community, citizenship and pastoral role, it is also part of the subject called Life Orientation; a new learning area, introduced as part of curriculum transformation in South Africa, intended to equip learners with the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes for successful living and learning (Rooth 2005). As my research at Qinqa Mntwana P.S. did not include classroom observations, I can not present an evaluation of neither method nor quality of the teaching within this subject at the school. One of the teachers in my research, however, taught Life Orientation to learners in the 8th grade and stipulated the great significance of this in connection to the problem of disclosure and general silence around issues of sexual prevention and HIV/AIDS. He said:

It is important to teach the young about these things because their parents do not. We know the children better. Parents are absent, they don't talk to their children, do not warn them about HIV/AIDS (Interview, T3 2005).

The principal at Qinqa Mntwana informed me that the school organises HIV/AIDS week in December every year, where they distribute fliers, and have workshops and seminars. She also underlined that among the great social challenges Qinqa Mntwana P.S. is faced with, the shame connected with HIV/AIDS was one of the greatest. Rooth (2005), who conducted a study in the provinces of Western Cape and Limpopo, concluded that although both teachers and learners recognise the worth of and need for this learning area, the status of Life Orientation is not yet optimal (Rooth 2005). According to Rooth (2005) this is due to large classes that require teacher centred transmission, a scarcity of learning materials, but also the fact that teachers' values may affect their teaching, specifically due to Life Orientation's value-laden content of HIV/AIDS and sexuality education (Rooth 2005:iv). Judging from the teachers that were interviewed at Qinqa Mntwana P.S. the problem with disclosure seems not to be very prominent among the school staff and there seems to be a general attitude of openness around the issues of HIV and AIDS, although there are social and cultural prohibitions in the community that surrounds the issues of HIV and AIDS. The teachers that were interviewed seem to be aware that several learners in the school suffer from the infection, either directly or indirectly, and they display great concern and the same parental attitude described above towards the learners that have problems related to HIV and AIDS.

The attitude towards the problem with disclosure and the focus on educating learners about HIV/AIDS corresponds both with expectations in Norms and Standards for Educators and with a criterion for extended professionalism. In focusing on these issues the teachers can be said to locate their work in a broader educational context as they work to educate the learners, parents and the community on the life saving significance of HIV/AIDS awareness and disclosure. This can also be related to the imperative of Ubuntu, as the threat of HIV/AIDS is one, which is strongly linked to the wellbeing of the community and is thus, according to Ubuntu, a responsibility for all community members.

Community developer

With regard to being a community developer and create links between school and the community, the teachers in the study of Harley et al. (2000) varied in their involvement. Some were active in inter-school collaborations and union work, while others did not see the need for these efforts (Harley et al. 2000). In practice, teachers' perceptions of their role as

community developers were “as diverse as they were contested, reflecting initiative and indifference, conformity to, and contestation of policy values, as well as optimistic and pessimistic views of policy initiatives towards educational transformation and change” (Harley et al. 2000:295). The teachers who were not active in building links between the school and the community argued that the needs and values in their communities were too diverse and complex even to identify and understand. In addition, the demands put on teachers were not matched by remuneration and thus discouraged them from doing more work than what was strictly obligatory (Harley et al. 2000).

The teachers at Qinqa Mntwana P.S. were not asked to discuss their personal opinion of the policy requirement of being community developers, however, the principal informed that the school organises fund raisers every year for the children who can not afford to pay the annual school fee and who can not afford to buy the required school uniform. The commitment towards the community incorporated in the concept of Ubuntu, which is clearly visible in the professional identity of the teachers at Qinqa Mntwana P.S., is exemplified in the following quotes:

When I teach a child, I must find out what she wants to be at the end of the day. Even outside school I must be exemplary and help others in terms of education. Less gifted parents need help to fill out forms and apply for bursaries etc. I'm a teacher, but I mustn't just be a teacher at school, also outside I must be an example (Interview, T4 2005).

With me I always told myself that I must do something about what I see; the burning issues of HIV/AIDS, poverty and crime in our areas. I said to myself before I got my job, I'm going to teach in this area. I'm going to teach these young kids. They are hungry, but they want to gain something out of me. So it was challenging. I wanted to prove that I can do something. In 2002 a child in my class, her shack was burnt and she had nothing to wear. I had to organise clothes from other kids so that she had something to wear. And I did achieve. The other parents helped (Interview, T4 2005).

Extra-curricular activities

Harley et al. (2000) reports that all the teachers in their research program were to some extent involved in extra-curricular activities such as sports and music, this being described as one of the competences that make up this role (Harley et al. 2000, DoE 2000:19). With regard to extra-curricular activities, the teachers interviewed at Qinqa Mntwana P.S. did participate in both sports and musical activities, although some reported a higher level of involvement than others did. One teacher even organised the GuguletuNyangaCrossroads

team³⁸, which participated in a regional championship of indigenous games and went on to join the national team, where one student won a gold medal. She commented on the importance of extra-curricular activities and said:

Here at school being a teacher I must not only teach the child inside the school, I must also take the child outside because inside and outside activities go hand in glove (Interview, T4 2005).

This perspective can be said to match part of Hoyle's (1980) criteria for extended professionalism as the teacher locates her work in a broader educational context, being aware of the importance of extra curricular activities in the school life of young learners.

The nature of the teacher-learner relationship: counselling, mentoring and parenting learners

A consistent theme running through all of the interviews conducted at Qinqa Mntwana P.S. is how the teachers describe their relation to the learners. On being asked what they see as their most important task as educators, the response is unified; they describe themselves as parents, and underline that a teacher's social responsibility overrides the responsibility of transmitting knowledge. In Norms and Standards for Educators, it is stated that teachers are expected to counsel the learners (DoE 2000:19). A part of the same role and competence requirement is to demonstrate a

... caring, committed and ethical professional behaviour and an understanding of education as dealing with the protection of children and the development of the whole person (DoE 2000:19).

During the interviews, this aspect of the teacher role, translated into a responsibility to parent the learners, seemed to be very prominent and something that concerned them greatly. It is my opinion that "parenting" is a defining and very significant aspect of their professional identity, and that there is a strong link between this aspect and the concept of Ubuntu. As described previously the essence of Ubuntu lies in the acknowledgement that community is ontologically prior to persons. Translated into the reality of teachers at Qinqa Mntwana P.S., and possibly most black South African teachers, Ubuntu poses an imperative, which makes the teachers obliged to take parental responsibility for their learners.

³⁸ Guguletu, Nyanga and Crossroads are all townships within the Cape Town area, and lie in close proximity of one another.

The teachers know that many parents fail to give their children what they need in terms of physical, social and emotional support. One teacher explains how parents in many cases are absent; they work long hours, many do not come home after work and the children are left to take care of themselves. In other cases, the children do not have parents at all, often due to AIDS related illnesses or death from AIDS, and they are taken care of by family members who already have other children to look after. The children live in areas where the neighbourhoods are rough with high crime rates, involving robberies, high-jackings, rapes, killings, sexual abuse of women and children, and other violence. This is their reality; it happens in their streets and they are not protected from seeing it, hearing about it and even experiencing it. In addition to this, the children's physical living conditions are mostly of a relatively poor standard. Many live in self-built shacks without electricity or running water. The ones that do not live in shacks stay in brick houses of poor condition; most have electricity and running water, but no hot water. Due to these social and physical circumstances, the children are in great need of physical, social and emotional protection and guidance. Thus, they will naturally turn to adults in their near social proximity for care and support. The teachers, culturally and socially shaped by the tradition of Ubuntu, and often knowing that they are more in tune with the children's needs than the adults that take care of them are, take on the responsibility of parents. One teacher says:

It's not supposed to be this way, but the teacher is someone who is responsible for the holistic development of the child. The parents should do more; we start from scratch to give the children the values they should learn at home and develop their identity. We have to prepare them for society's expectations. My goal for the children is to see them growing up and be responsible citizens...and survive the AIDS pandemic. It is a big responsibility (Interview, T3 2005).

In order to fully convey the essence of how the teachers see themselves as parents for their learners, how they perform their duty as parents in different ways, and how this aspect is incorporated in their professional identity, I will present a selection of quotes from the interviews conducted at Qinqa Mntwana P.S. (2005):

I'm not just a teacher; I'm a parent as well. I'm a social worker, I'm everything! I have to see to their needs (Interview, T1 2005).

If you lack parental skills the learners will withdraw from you; be a parent to them and they will open up. Parents fail, we have to act as parents and know that we are contributing something very valuable to their futures. I visit pupils' homes after school. It is part of my job getting to know their conditions – it's not enough to know the child only during the school day (Interview, T1 2005).

I must give them knowledge, but I must also give them love. If you don't give them love they won't learn anything, they will hate you. They must feel that they are with their parent when they are with me. I am pretty sure of that; I'm the mother of those kids. I've got a child in my class now that was born with AIDS, but he is coping because I see to it that he is getting love from me, I must look after that child and see to it that he is warm in class (Interview, T4 2005).

I must teach them and know their weaknesses and accept the way they are. I must love them as my own children, I must protect them. They must feel that when my teacher is here I'm safe. When I'm not at school they must feel that their mother is not there. Also I encourage them to love each other. My children must protect each other. It's like when you have siblings. I tell them: You are all my children, you are brothers and sisters. I also tell them that we are not on the same level. I don't like discrimination. I don't like them laughing at each other. If she doesn't have those nice shoes today, she may have them tomorrow, and that kid who has the nice shoes, may not have them tomorrow (Interview, T5 2005).

In my opinion, it is safe to conclude that the teachers in my research fulfil the competence requirements stated in Norms and Standards for Educators with regard to counselling and providing a holistic development of the learners in this respect. The quotes above also express how the concept of Ubuntu is a natural part of these teachers' professional identities. To be a teacher, it seems, is also to be a parent, and thus on the question of whether or not all this social work is worth the effort, one teacher replied:

I don't think it's worth it, but I love to be a teacher. I don't want to leave this profession. The children are wise gods to me. In class when I look at their faces I see that they are innocent, they are doing everything from the heart (Interview, T4 2005).

Idealism

I experienced that a sense of idealism was a strong force of motivation for most of the teachers that were interviewed at Qinqa Mntwana P.S., and I see it as significant when describing their professional identities. In Harley et al.'s (2000) study this is described as teachers who had "something extra" over and above the policy prescriptions, despite the fact that many teachers were "less than" the roles outlined by policy (Harley et al. 2000:293). Capturing and articulating the concept of "something extra", however, presents certain

difficulties. Harley et al. (2000) suggests that Barber (1995) comes close when he refers to the “unknown universe” of teaching, which is “...that part of all education that does not obey the laws of physics, that defies logic, but, at the same time, is the key to educational success” (Barber 1995:76 cited in Harley et al. 2000:294). One teacher interviewed in Harley et al.’s (2000) study described this “something extra” by referring to teachers who were “called” and for whom a professional commitment and a sense of vocation was intrinsic (Harley et al. 2000:294). The researchers in Harley et al.’s (2000) study remark that the teachers in possession of “something extra” did not necessarily display roles and competencies expected by policy, and the researchers thus conclude that it can not be apprehended by describing discrete roles, nor can a “calling” be captured by policy criteria (Harley et al. 2000:294). Based on my findings at Qinqa Mntwana P.S I would say that the idealism, the “something extra” and the phenomenon of being “called” could be defined within the concept of Ubuntu. A feeling of responsibility towards the learners as future citizens of a community, seem to be quite prominent in the teachers who displayed “something extra”. Two selected quotes from teachers at Qinqa Mntwana P.S. signify this:

They mustn't leave my class knowing that 1+1 is 2, that's not enough. That is not enough! But raising them to become good citizens; to know each other, to know other people, to accept other people. And fortunately in SA, we might be blacks, but we are different people – there are Sothos, Zulus, coloured, Muslim – but we are all South Africans; we belong to this continent. That is how I want my children to grow up. I normally tell them that one day you are going to a doctor and I will come to you being an old lady. So I know that what I do to that child will have an impact (Interview, T5 2005).

...you must love the work if you are going to it. I don't want to leave the country and do something else. I must stay here, it is made for me. I was born and bred in SA so I must also teach in SA. I can't leave for greener pastures because the kids will do the same (Interview, T4 2005).

The teachers at Qinqa Mntwana were also asked when they experience that they succeeded as teachers. In my opinion, the quotes below also contribute to display idealism, “something extra” and a sense of vocational commitment:

I feel successful...when a child who had a problem is progressing. You feel WOW! I did something good! Sometimes a child comes from another class and the teacher couldn't handle the problem. You try and try, you even dream at night, and the moment the child... it's like in the Bible when it says in the beginning there was no light, there was darkness. Then God said let there be light, and there was light. This child comes being in the darkness, but the minute you put that light in his mind than he says “wow”. You enlighten the child (Interview, T5 2005).

Teaching is a calling rather than a profession; if you become a teacher by calling you just have to endure the pain (Interview, T1 2005).

I don't regret taking this profession; it's a very noble profession. You know that you make a difference, especially when you see a child that you taught has become something. Each and every day is a successful day for me because I know I've made a difference in someone's life (Interview, T1 2005).

Communication with parents

The community, citizenship and pastoral role also comprises the development of supportive relations with parents to discuss the well-being, conduct and progress of their children (DoE 2000:14). In the study of Harley et al. (2000) this was not a very prominent role, neither was the role of counselling; a new role for most teachers and not easily embraced (Harley et al. 2000:292).

As in the study of Harley et al. (2000), the teachers at Qinqa Mntwana P.S. reported minimal contact with parents, except in instances where parents approach teachers or the principal for assistance in various matters. The principal, who also teaches at the school, explains how parents often arrive at her office unannounced and with great social and financial problems that they want the school to help them with. Knowing that these parents live under very harsh conditions, she feels obliged to put everything else aside and assist the parents in solving their problems. According to her, the parents do not seem to understand the importance of making appointments or taking action to solve their problems. She elaborates:

It is important to work on parental involvement; some parents don't seem to care about their children's education. They don't sign report cards, don't show up for meetings. Parents are still clinging to traditional ways... a rural way of life. Before teachers did everything, parents did not have to be involved (Interview, T1 2005).

It can thus be said that the communication that exists between parents and the school is not especially reciprocal in nature, and one that both teachers and the principal is not content with. It is clear, however, that the principal sympathises with the parents and makes an effort to assist them with their problems, although she experiences this as an extra burden to her work load as a principal and teacher.

I find that the principal's reference to *traditional ways* contributes to the understanding of the professional identities of these teachers. The quote refers to a time, 20 to 30 years back in rural South Africa, when the teacher was a highly respected person. Being educated automatically gave a high standing position in a community and he or she could thus be

expected to take responsibility for certain community matters, such as reading newspapers, or letters from husbands who worked in the mines of Johannesburg (field diary 2005). Generally, being a teacher was considered a privileged position, which earned much respect both in rural and urban areas in South Africa. Although the level of illiteracy has decreased since that time, from 25.5% in 1980 to 13.6% in recent statistics (Statistics South Africa 1996, UNA Norway 2003), many South Africans look upon the teacher role much as they did in the past. Teachers on the other hand are in a situation where they struggle to redefine their professional role according to what is prescribed in the NQF, the C2005 and in Norms and Standards for Educators. As previously described, this is not an easy task as the educational reform in South Africa is exceptionally comprehensive and teachers and school administrators have been given little or no guidance in implementing or understanding the new educational philosophy which has implications for the teacher role, and for teaching methods and curriculum content. In short, close to every aspect of the South African school reality has undergone drastic changes, posing enormous challenges for teachers and particularly so for teachers in underprivileged areas of South Africa. In the midst of these changes, we find teachers who work to find their place in a seemingly chaotic situation. Needless to say this has implications for their professional identities as they somehow exist in a schism between a traditional and a new teacher role; the traditional role is one that they are expected to move away from, while the new role is one they are not sure how to fill. This is bound to have an impact on the communication between parents and teachers as one can suspect that parents see the teachers according to a more traditional teacher role, while teachers are attempting to redefine this role to fit current educational policy requirements.

The traditional vs. the new teacher role

I would like to continue on the topic of the discrepancy between the traditional and the new teacher role, which is discussed above with regard to communication between parents and teachers. Harley et al. (2000) refers to Bernstein (1996) and notes that teachers that have “something extra” enjoy an “achieved” rather than an “ascribed” professional status (Bernstein 1996 cited in Harley et al. 2000:294). In the past the teachers received respect much thanks to their “ascribed”, as opposed to their “achieved” status; the control relationship between the teacher and the learner was more “positioned” than “interpersonal” (Bernstein 1996:99 cited in Harley et al. 2000:295). With the new educational legislation in South Africa post 1994, great changes were made that affected this control relationship. During the struggle against apartheid, both teachers and learners were at the forefront and

thus a heritage of disorder still exists at many schools (Harley et al. 2000). Traditionally “controlling” the learners was seen as a prioritised task. The shift in the teacher role from “control to leadership” described in the preamble to the NDOE *Duties and Responsibilities* document, presents new challenges (Harley et al. 2000:296).

A serious flaw in the new legislation, as I see it, is that the previous system of teacher control is not replaced with a system that allows for leadership. Corporal punishment has been widely acknowledged in most South African schools and together with the teacher’s respected position in the community it used to form the basis of classroom and school control. Although outlawed by the 1996 South African Schools Act, corporal punishment was still practiced in most of the schools that Harley et al. (2000) visited (Harley et al. 2000). As described several times in this study, the realities of South African classrooms can be harsh, and it is not uncommon for secondary learners to bring weapons to school and be up to 25 years of age (Halrey et al. 2000). In Norms and Standards for Educators, one can find two competences that allude to classroom management. Under the role of *Leader*, *Administrator* and *Manager* this competence reads “Constructing a classroom atmosphere which is democratic but disciplined, and which is sensitive to culture, race and gender differences as well as to disabilities” (DoE 2000:17). The second is found under the role of *Learning Mediator* and reads “Creating a learning environment in which learners develop strong internal discipline; conflict is handled through debate and argument, and learners seek growth and achievement” (DoE 2000:15). Neither of these can be said to allow teachers to establish and maintain control in their classrooms in a new way, without making use of the traditional forms of corporal punishment. Jansen (1998) points out that a problem with C2005 is its claim to transform the social relationships in a classroom and school (Jansen 1998 cited in Harley et al. 2000:296). According to Harley et al. (2000), this antiseptic view of the teacher-learner relationship is carried through to teacher roles and conduct, leaving teachers with few officially approved means of asserting and maintaining control (Harley et al. 2000:296). Policy seems to assume that the classroom is a conflict free zone with spontaneous co-operation and discipline, where the teacher effortlessly enjoys respect and is thus free to explore the new roles and competences required by policy (Harley et al. 2000). Research shows, however, that for many teachers the need to keep discipline is the most prominent aspect in the teacher role. Policy therefore, can be said to sketch out an unattainable ideal that fails to work within the given circumstances. I believe there is a pronounced risk that this will lead to teacher focused teaching methods that are not in line

with policy requirements and that the classroom environment will be deprived of the creative activity and critical learner discussion that should be present.

At Qinqa Mntwana P.S (2005), teachers also struggled to keep discipline in their classes. Two of the teachers' comments on the situation coincide with the findings of Harley et al. (2000) with regard to the problems teachers experience due to outlawing corporal punishment:

The government thinks that we are donkeys. In class, a child can kick the teacher, but not the other way around. Parents take advantage as well. But you must not let them take that advantage. The government is getting the parents the idea that we are here to serve the child. We can't punish the child even if he is late. Like hitting the child. We used to be hit by our teacher. I think we should be allowed to beat the child, but not to overdo it (Interview, T4 2005).

These are new times and it's more difficult to discipline the children; they have rights and can't be forced to wear a uniform. They harass the teachers. It was better before; teachers got more respect, there was discipline and teachers went to work not worried (Interview, T2 2005).

In my research at Qinqa Mntwana P.S (2005), teachers had much to say about the new teacher role that they were expected to fill. Most of the interviewed teachers felt that they to some extent, received respect from the learners and the learners' parents, but that the teaching profession in general does not receive the respect it deserves (field diary 2005). One teacher was asked if he was proud to be a teacher, and replied:

I am, but teaching today in SA is not looked upon as a noble profession at all. Our government is not doing anything to make teachers remain in the profession. The government is not making teaching an attractive profession; it's looked down upon. As if presidents are not produced from teachers! This profession is not growing, not developing; we are doing the same as we did nine years ago. It has changed from apartheid, but it's very slow and not challenging. If you ask the kids what they want to do when they grow up very few will say they want to be teachers. It's of no interest, not even for us (Interview, T3 2005).

In general, teachers at Qinqa Mntwana P.S felt overlooked by the government:

The government doesn't respect us. They don't care about us and our problems; they just want us to deliver. They're only concerned about the children. We must just deliver. They don't balance their scales. They are only interested in the outcome. They are not doing enough. They impose on us; we want this and that and we have to do it. They threaten us; it's either do or die. They really don't respect us. I don't know, maybe I'm wrong; this is how I feel (Interview, T5 2005).

No respect from the government; they abuse us! This year we must change the way of teaching. First we changed to OBE, now to RNCS³⁹. We are never asked or consulted about these changes (Interview, T2 2005).

In addition, several quotes reveal that although teachers were glad that apartheid was a thing of the past, they miss the respect that their profession used to enjoy:

Today we are free because everything is done democratically, even though during apartheid we did have a say because we toyi-toyed⁴⁰, but we had to use force at that time. Today we just go to the table and talk. The respect towards the teachers has changed. In the olden days we were respected citizens. Teachers don't have value anymore, before everyone would respect you. I don't want to say it was better to be a teacher under apartheid, but before I wouldn't even talk to my teacher. I was too much respectful. If I gave my teacher a cup of tea I wouldn't give it with one hand, but using both hands. I would even bow. In a way now after apartheid, maybe we also contribute to the problem of discipline. The way we speak. There must be no bosses anymore, we must be equal. Before you must not ask questions, now you can say: teacher, you are not supposed to beat me. Today children have got rights (Interview, T5 2005).

In conclusion, I believe it is fair to say that what is described and deliberated on above are clear indications that the educational policy implementation strategy in South Africa post 1994 is insufficient and out of touch with reality in a way that has serious consequences for school life in South Africa. Maintaining control and being able to act as a leader in a classroom is essential in order to equip the learners with skills and knowledge necessary in order to be contributing citizens of the South African society. Due to a considerable gap between policy and practice South African schools, and especially underprivileged ones, are struggling to reach such goals. The gap exists between what policy requires and what is feasible considering the actual circumstances, but it also exists in a struggle between the old and the new professional role that teachers play. The fact that teachers and school administrators have not received training and guidance in understanding what is expected of them in the new educational system of South Africa, creates substantial obstacles with regard

³⁹ RNCS stands for Revised National Curriculum Statement see section 4.2.3. for additional information.

⁴⁰ Toyi-toyi is a traditional South African militant dance with high steps performed by protesters, accompanied by singing and chanting of slogans. It was actively used as a form of protest in the struggle against apartheid.

to teaching the prescribed curriculum and fulfilling policy expectations in a way that would benefit society, the schools and themselves.

III. Leader, administrator and manager:

The educator will make decisions appropriate to the level, manage learning in the classroom, carry out classroom administrative duties efficiently and participate in school decision - making structures. These competences will be performed in ways, which are democratic, which support learners and colleagues, and which demonstrate responsiveness to changing circumstances and needs (DoE 2000:13).

In the study conducted by Harley et al. (2000), teachers were very active in record keeping, but not in planning and co-ordination of team teaching approaches to learning (Harley et al. 2000:292). The teachers at Qinqa Mntwana P.S. also reported that record-keeping and assessment work took much time. One teacher said:

We are still busy with OBE and they tell us now there is RNCS and IQMS⁴¹ whereby we must be assessed. It gives us too much work, especially with assessments. Everything must be assessed! (Interview, T4 2005).

I believe this statement to be quite descriptive of the frustrating situation that many South African teachers find themselves in. As mentioned earlier in the critique of OBE, a problem with implementation is that teachers in general have great difficulties interpreting the “language” of C2005. This is due to several factors; the most significant being that teachers in general were not included in the process of formulating the new educational policy and did not receive necessary training in implementing it. Also, the reality of their everyday working lives leaves little time for the ‘self-study’ of educational policy texts. The teachers at Qinqa Mntwana P.S. do get the opportunity to attend workshops, but as one of the Heads of Department says:

I see to it that the teachers actually do attend the workshops because sometimes the teacher goes to the workshop and stays for an hour and then leaves early (Interview, T5 2005).

⁴¹ The IQMS is an abbreviation for Integrated Quality Management System, a policy tool to ensure quality in education, which was agreed upon in 2003 between the Education Department and teacher organizations in South Africa (Weber 2005).

With regard to the assessment requirements of C2005 and OBE, it is no understatement that they are excessive. Assessing is an integral part of the philosophy behind Outcomes Based Education. As it is based on and centred around specific outcomes, teachers spend much time assessing whether or not their learners have reached the desired outcomes for their level. As previously mentioned, there is an additional danger that teachers, having a hard time interpreting the curriculum expectations, will perceive the outcomes to be the ends of education and thus turn teaching into an act, which is centred strictly on assessments (Jansen 1999a). In this way, learning processes are at risk of being undermined resulting in potentially negative learning experiences and results.

Given these circumstances, what can be said about the professional identity of the black teachers in South Africa? How do they experience being subject to educational policy regulations that they experience as overwhelming and difficult to understand? What are the results on their professional practice when the reality of their professional everyday life is filled with an overload of assessment demands; difficulties in understanding the curriculum they are expected to teach; and adding to this, classes with learners that often have great social, emotional and physical difficulties in their lives? The answers to these questions are probably many and diverse; however, one can assume that a general feeling of frustration is present among these teachers. It is a fact that many teachers are leaving the profession and this has grave consequences for the educational situation in South Africa. In 2005, a report was prepared for the *Education Labour Relations Council* (ELRC), which aimed to gain insight into the factors that determine the supply of and demand for educators based in public schools. The report was prepared by a research consortium comprising the *Human Sciences Research Council* and the *Medical Research Council of South Africa*, and consisted of various components, such as educator attrition⁴² and the role played by job satisfaction, morale, workload and HIV/AIDS in attrition (Hall et al. 2005). Researched factors leading to attrition were remuneration, workload stress and HIV/AIDS, the latter being an obvious cause of attrition as the teacher is unable to continue work due to sickness or death. With regard to remuneration, this was listed as the factor that contributed the most to teachers' dissatisfaction with their professional reality. These factors were also found in the study of Harley et al. (2000) and my study at Qinqa Mntwana P.S. (2005). Two teachers interviewed at the latter commented:

⁴² The term *attrition* refers to people leaving employment (Hall et al. 2005:1).

Teachers are leaving teaching in their thousands. The kids that I taught they are now doing IT work. They earn more than I do, and they just started their careers! We are not paid well. If I had money I would leave this and do law, but I have a family to support (Interview, T3 2005).

In schools there is lots of pressure now that there is democracy. Before the teachers were paid better, before your salary would increase every year. They stopped that now. Someone who started working last month gets the same salary as I do who have worked for 10 yrs. There is too much work (Interview, T4 2005).

Out of the 21,358 respondents in the ELCR survey (2005), 70 % reported that their work load and stress related to this had increased in the last three years and accredited this to factors such as lack of parental involvement, shortage of educators and a lack of discipline among learners. Interestingly, it was found that most teachers in the ELRC-survey reported that a significant factor contributing to job stress was experiencing stress with the preparation/assessment involved in applying the OBE approach and experiencing stress arising from the implementation of new curricula, pass requirements and reporting systems (Hall, et al. 2005). It is my opinion that this strengthens the assumptions on previously mentioned factors contributing to a frustrating professional situation for South African teachers.

Therefore, in assessing teachers' performances with regard to fulfilling requirements for the role of leader, administrator and manager, it is central to remember that the conditions for a successful fulfilment of such a role might not be present. Seen in this perspective it is my opinion that it is not relevant to analyse teachers' professional behaviour to see whether or not their practice matches the criteria for extended professionalism as circumstances out of their control complicate this practice.

IV. Interpreter and designer of learning programmes:

The educator will understand and interpret provided learning programmes, design original learning programmes, identify the requirements for a specific context of learning and select and prepare suitable textual and visual resources for learning. The educator will also select, sequence and pace the learning in a manner sensitive to the differing needs of the subject/learning area and learners (DoE 2000:13).

In the research of Harley et al. (2000), the role of interpreter and designer of learning programmes came out as the weakest. Teachers seemed to lack the reflexive competences necessary to fulfil the requirements of this role (Harley et al. 2000). Harley et al. (2000) reports that standard practice in the schools that participated in their research was the implementation of provided programs rather than the designing of original learning programs. The teachers did not feel that they had the skills necessary to create their own learning programs, but rather that they knew how to implement a syllabus and evaluate learners' work (Harley et al. 2000:292). Seen from the perspective of teachers in underprivileged schools in South Africa designing original learning programmes is a requirement quite far from what is feasible with the resources available at such schools. There are many learners, few teachers, a scarcity of learning materials and technology, and the pressure of living under the previously described straining social circumstances. On top of it, there are the policy demands of OBE and Norms and Standards for Educators, which teachers and school administrators have had little or no training in implementing. Do these circumstances allow for extended professional practice? Is it reasonable to expect that teachers perform as extended professionals when they are under the constant pressure from all factors described above? I will leave the answer to this rhetorical question up to the reader, however, as mentioned it is of great importance to be aware of this aspect as a realistic evaluation of these teachers professionalism might not be possible when circumstances out of their control do not allow them to perform according to prescribed standards of professionalism.

An assessment of this role was not part of the research conducted at Qinqa Mntwana P.S, and although one can assume that findings with regard to teachers' performances according to this role would be similar in Qinqa Mntwana P.S I will not deliberate any further on requirements connected to this role.

V. Scholar, researcher and lifelong learner:

The educator will achieve ongoing personal, academic, occupational and professional growth through pursuing reflective study and research in their learning area, in broader professional and educational matters, and in other related fields (DoE 2000:13).

Harley et al. (2000) states that most teachers in their research were involved in personal study, however, “formal study as an index of lifelong learning can be misleading as research and reflection on practice were not generally apparent” (Harley et al. 2000:292).

At Qinqa Mntwana P.S, the teachers seem to regularly attend workshops. As previously mentioned, however, teachers with administrative duties complain that they have to see to it that the teachers actually do attend these workshops as they often skip them. When researching available material on the conditions in these schools it becomes quite clear that the time for personal introspection is rather limited, and probably not what teachers chose to spend time doing when their everyday duties as a teacher are completed.

It seems, however, that the school does make an effort to encourage personal reflection and to incorporate overarching ideas of how to achieve desired practice at the school. The principal underlines that the school has a motto and a vision, which is constructed by teachers themselves and which is changed every 3 yrs. She could, however, give no clear answers as to how they actively use these statements in their work, or whether or not they were an integrated part of the teachers’ practice.

I believe that much the same conclusion with regard to professionalism can be drawn from these findings as with findings analysed above. Due to excessive policy demands that influence teachers’ everyday working lives as well the straining social circumstances they and their learners live under, the energy and time left for being a so called *lifelong learner* is close to nonexistent. The grounds for assessing their professional practice with regard to Hoyle’s (1980) criteria are thus not present.

5.2.2 Final reflection on fieldwork

The analysis above is based on two studies that are both limited with regard to the research sample, the time and geographical space in which the data is collected. Although the study of Harley et al. (2000) is far more comprehensive than the study at Qinqa Mntwana P.S, neither of them can be said to be statistically representative nor sufficiently comprehensive to provide a detailed analysis of every aspect of teachers’ professionalism. Despite the fact the research material from Harley et al. (2000) and my own study is statistically limited, it does display tendencies that one can assume are representative for the educational context in South Africa and the teachers’ professional identities. Operating within the given framework, I have managed to identify certain aspects of teachers’ identities and have

matched them to criteria of either restricted or extended professionalism in an attempt to answer the research questions initially posed. As an addition to this, I have looked at other aspects of their professional identities, such as how they employ the imperative of Ubuntu in their everyday lives as teachers and how the common lack of external support and resources limit their possibilities to fulfil policy requirements and the requirements of extended professionalism. I would like to point out that in most ways Harley et al.'s study (2000) and the study at Qinqa Mntwana P.S coincide. The area where I identified the greatest difference in findings was in the analysis of the role labelled *Community, citizenship and pastoral role*. The teachers at Qinqa Mntwana seemed to fulfil the requirements for this role in a very competent way, while in the findings of Harley et al. (2000) the teachers observed and interviewed did not display the same commitment in fulfilling the prescribed requirements. It is my opinion that this can be attributed to a methodological discrepancy between the two studies, where the question that teachers answered at Qinqa Mntwana P.S were more oriented towards aspects related to the *Community, citizenship and pastoral role*, and that I as the researcher encouraged the teachers to deliberate specifically on these issues. The study of Harley et al (2000) on the other side had a broader focus and thus the findings display tendencies across a range of issues, not focusing specifically on the *Community, citizenship and pastoral role*.

I do not believe it is possible to conclude in any final way on the exact properties of these teachers' professional identities; this is due to the fact that both the studies that have been analysed are limited, but it is also due to the nature of the phenomenon of identity that one can not reach conclusive definitions. Identity is defined by the various meanings we attach to ourselves and that others attach to us, and it is in constant change in accord with cultural and societal scripts. It follows that that the teachers at Qinqa Mntwana P.S. and at the schools in the research program of Harley et al. (2000) possess a combination of traits - from extended and restricted professionalism, from the culture they belong to, the history they are a part of, the community that surrounds them, the parents they grew up with and so on. In short, they are products of all the experiences that have shaped them, both in their professional and in their personal lives.

6. A CONCLUSIVE DELIBERATION

The following is a conclusive deliberation in two parts. Firstly, I will look at the issues, which have been presented and analysed in Chapters 4 and 5, bringing together both the macro and micro perspective of South Africa's educational context and the professional identities of its black teachers in an attempt to summarise the current situation. Secondly, I wish to present a final discussion where I thematically sum up the thesis by presenting a deliberation on the mechanism of identity formation in a South African context.

6.1.1 The policy / practice disjunction

The educational reform in South Africa posed daunting professional challenges for teachers. In order for the South African teachers to conduct their work in accordance with the demands of C2005, they would have to undergo a comprehensive professional transformation in a very limited space of time. In addition to strict time restraints, the means by which to achieve the outcomes described in the NQF and C2005 were left entirely up to the teachers. In an official departmental booklet, one can read that

... educators are recognised as professionals who can make curriculum decisions in the best interests of the learners and who do not have to rely on the dictates of a centrally devised syllabus (DoE undated:25.27. cited in Harley et al. 2000:288).

I find it puzzling that the educationalists and reformers behind such statements did not consider how the teachers of South Africa were supposed to achieve the needed level of extended professionalism in order to comply with these demands. They were expected to overcome centuries-old educational practices, social inequalities linked to educational difference, and apartheid-based social values. It was expected of them to transcend from a level of restricted professionalism to a level of extended professionalism in a very short time, and without the necessary training and guidance to master such a professional transformation. Based on these facts, how could the teachers of South Africa be expected to make autonomous "curriculum decisions"? Reading Norms and Standards for Educators I am struck by the overwhelming amount of competencies that one teacher is expected to incorporate in her role as a teacher. In sum, the collective amount of competences underpinning each role describes not only the "the perfect teacher", but alludes more to "the perfect person". As an example, I would like to quote from Norms and Standards for

Educators a practical competence under the role of *learning mediator*, which states that teachers should be

... employing appropriate strategies for working with learner needs and disabilities. Including sign language where appropriate (DoE 2000:15).

I find that this quote exemplifies the enormous expectations that teachers in the harsh realities of South African classrooms meet. They are not only expected to fulfil a new and unfamiliar teacher role, teach a prescribed curriculum content that they have hardly had time to become familiar with, meet excessive assessment demands, and deal with the great social and emotional issues of their learners; they are also expected to learn sign language.

Generally, in the study of Harley et al. (2000) and in the study at Qinqa Mntwana P.S, teachers did not match the standards of extended professionalism expected by policy, although they often proved to be something over and above what was expected of them. This was exemplified by the idealism of teachers at Qinqa Mntwana P.S., and in the way they took on a parental responsibility for the learners. It was also exemplified by teachers in Harley et al.'s (2000) study who displayed the same idealism described as “something extra” in the sense that they had a vocational calling and thus a professional commitment that was not directly related to policy criteria (Harley et al. 2000:294).

Harley et al. (2000) concludes that it is simply an unattainable goal for one individual teacher to play each of the roles described in a meaningful way and that they should rather be provided collectively by the school. They also found that an effective teacher was one who made an appropriate weighting of the roles and competencies rather than one who would attempt to demonstrate each and every competence underpinning the prescribed roles (Harley et al. 2000:293).

The NQF, C2005, and Norms and Standards for Educators are formulated with idealism and noble intentions. It seems however, that good intentions and the idealistic prospects of a future South Africa with freedom and equity for all, was not coupled with a foundational analysis of the contrasted school reality of South Africa. Norms and Standards for Educators and the other three policy documents that have been previously described display internal consistency and coherence, as well as being progressive and transformatory. Harley et al. (2000), noted, however, that teaching practice can not be efficiently managed in the implementation of official goals; the reality showed how “irreducible it was to such

programmatic planning and management” (Harley et al. 2000:299). Berlach and McNaught (2007) contend that “change managers attempting to implement a radically different educational model, without first clearly thinking through the implications for classroom practice, are likely to encounter a collision of paradigms and with it, create system-wide insecurity and instability” (Berlach & McNaught 2007:4).

Sarason (1991) concludes that policy makers and educational reformists tend to make the mistake of confusing a change in policy with a change in practice. South African policy designers seem to have overlooked the fact that when implementing a comprehensive educational change, it requires a break with what has been accepted as right and it will inevitably bring about confusion, possible resentment and even anxiety. Fullan (2001) refers to Marris (1975), who stresses that if one is to reach a fundamental understanding of the phenomenon of change it is of great importance to recognise the fact that all real change involves loss, anxiety and struggle (Marris 1975 cited in Fullan 2001:19). Whether the change is imposed or if one actively participates in creating a change, the meaning of the change will not be entirely clear at the outset and thus feelings of ambivalence will occur. One will automatically react to the imposed or wanted change by seeing it in relation to a reality, which is already familiar (Fullan 2001:20). Marris (1975) also underlines that real change represents both a personal and a collective experience that can cause uncertainty and ambivalence, and that this emotional aspect of change should be addressed, or difficulties in the multifaceted process of change are very likely to hinder the change from being realised (Marris 1975 cited in Fullan 2001:20). In this respect, Marris (1974) urges reformers to be realistic about the phenomenon of change, and warns of impatience with regard to implementation. He states that although the proposed change may be intelligent and fair

... people cannot reconcile themselves to the loss of the familiar attachments in terms of some impersonal utilitarian calculation of the common good. They have to find their own meaning in these changes before they can live with them. Hence the reformers must listen as well as explain, continually accommodating their design to other purposes, other kinds of experience, modifying and renegotiating, long after they would like to believe that their conception was finished. (Marris 1974:156).

Fullan (2001) strongly emphasises that it is crucial to look at teachers’ realities in order to understand how they react to and cope with change, and that the outcome of the intended change ultimately relies on what teachers think about it. He also insists that if teachers fail to find any sense or meaning in a proposed change, it will not succeed regardless of any touted

benefits (Fullan 2001). Goodson (1992) concludes along the same lines and maintains that professional development involves shifting from seeing teachers as educators to seeing them as people; not just as roles, but also as human beings with needs and aspirations (Goodson 1992 cited in Harley et al. 2000:300).

Real change thus implies that localised, contextualised and personalised efforts are made to assist teachers in creating meaning to the intended changes; teachers do not need impersonal policy directives communicated from above with authority and control as it is likely that this results in meaninglessness for educators on the practical level. Policy must be sensitive to contextual diversity and should thus be implemented at a local level by those most in touch with current realities. Therefore delivery and implementation “depend crucially on strong links between national and provincial departments and schools, and clearly defined levels of responsibility and autonomy within and between these institutions” (Harley et al. 2000:300). As South Africa altered the previous educational system by replacing the racially defined educational departments with provincial departments of education, the intention was for policy designed at national level to be implemented with more autonomy at the provincial level. Harley et al. (2000) refers to an evaluation conducted by South African Institute for Distance Education in 1998, and contends that this replacement, instead of allowing for autonomy, rather created “complex relationships and poorly defined responsibilities” (SAID 1998 cited in Harley et al. 2000:300). A serious result of this is the confusion experienced by teachers and the limited amount of knowledge they have about the movements in national policy⁴³. The lack of communication between the national and local level, with all its implied consequences, is likely to result in the OBE being interpreted in a simplified, rigid and bureaucratic way with an excessive focus on the paper work requirements, thus overlooking the teachers-as-person perspective, which is so central in making a reform work. Harley et al. (2000) refer to Jansen (1998) who argues that it is of great importance to understand the true nature of OBE; C2005 and OBE is more than just an educational reform, it is a politically symbolical act in which the state is primarily focused on its own legitimacy (Jansen 1998 cited in Harley et al. 2000:301). This relates to Fullan’s (2001) warning of not letting educational reforms substitute societal reforms, as the former can only contribute to the latter, and not replace it (Fullan 2001). Harley et al. (2000) also alert to the danger of

⁴³ A study conducted in 1999 by the Palmer Development Group concluded that only 19% of the professionally produced information booklets, stickers and posters that leave the national department of education actually find its way into the hands of staff and governing bodies (Palmer Development Group 1999 cited in Harley et al. 2000:300).

determining the outcome of an educational reform based on changed teacher practice as these might be superficial if profound changes do not occur at the level of teachers' beliefs (Harley et al. 2000). Changes that comprise a redefinition of teachers' professional identity and their beliefs about teaching are more likely to be sustainable as they are personal (Harley et al. 2000).

South Africa today, 15 years after its emancipation, is still on its way to becoming a functioning democracy. Essential to this development is an educational system, whose teachers are in possession of the skills and insights necessary to empower the young generations of South Africans to meet the demands of a complex society that still has a way to go when it comes to redistributing of resources and creating social equity. Harley et al. (2000), notes that policy on curriculum and teacher roles in South Africa reflects the influence of globalisation, "with an emphasis on liberal values, interdisciplinarity, flexible multi-skilling and information technology" (Harley et al. 2000:302). These values and practices reflect an image corresponding more with historically advantaged than historically disadvantaged schools. Thus, there is a very real risk that educational policy in South Africa furthers an "unequalising tendency" (Harley et al. 2000:302), which should belong to the country's past, not its present and certainly not its future.

6.1.2 A way forward - the mechanisms of national and personal identity formation

As the new educational system in South Africa is settling into "the country's pedagogical and social imagination", the conception of a new South African identity is being created (Soudien & Baxen 1999:138). Pinar, referring to the American context, states:

...we are what we know. We are, however, also what we do not know. If what we know about ourselves – our history, our culture, our national identity – is deformed by absences, denials, and incompleteness, then our identity – both as individuals and as Americans – is fragmented (Pinar 1993 cited in Soudien & Baxen 1997:455).

With the history of South Africa as a backdrop, this is a strikingly relevant statement. Soudien and Baxen (1999) appropriately ask, "How and by whom is the process being conceptualised, developed, implemented and managed?" (Soudien & Baxen 1999:134). This is a relevant question to ask as it addresses the issue of ownership, which is closely related to the issue of identity. The formal bureaucracy of South Africa characterised the construction

and the content of the new reform. In the Western Cape⁴⁴ a *Curriculum Management Committee* (CMC) was created, as well as eight *Learning Area Committees* (LACs). The majority of the LACs were co-ordinated and chaired by departmental officials, and as a result, the type of participation that evolved was one of responsiveness, where representatives were presented with OBE, but had no opportunity to examine its origins⁴⁵. The aspect of race was also a matter of some concern, and it was remarked by a teacher belonging to a major union that the process was dominated by white officials⁴⁶ (Soudien & Baxen 1999). Taking South Africa's oppressive past into consideration, however, makes it difficult and highly sensitive to raise issues of racism. Thus, this was never allowed to develop as a critical debate within the constructive discourse of the OBE process.

Advocates of OBE have claimed that it is founded on a principle of inclusion, as opposed to the past philosophy of exclusion, stressing that the previously disadvantaged people of South Africa will now gain access to the educational and economic systems. This notion of access, however, is based on an idea of assimilating the previously disadvantaged "into the existing dominant world order" (Soudien & Baxen 1999:141). The basic philosophy of the educational reform in South Africa can in other words be said to be partial, one-sided and clearly defined by the groups of people who have articulated it. In South Africa, there is a need for a curriculum making process that interrogates, and shows a greater sensitivity to the multiplicity of differences that have inspired the country's history. The identity struggles that are currently playing themselves out in South Africa must be addressed so that the country's young people will be able to recognise the new educational script for what it is: a text for a particular understanding of the world, in which they must insert their own epistemologies and ontologies (Soudien & Baxen 1997:458).

Nekhwesha (1999) follows this line of thought and emphasises what he perceives as the primary reason for employing outcomes based education as a strategy for education in South Africa. According to him, it lies in

⁴⁴ The Western Cape is one of South Africa's nine provinces.

⁴⁵ The theoretical traditions that serve as the foundation for the new educational philosophy in South Africa are all adopted from countries outside of Africa.

⁴⁶ This is confirmed by Halla B. Holmarsdottir, who was a visiting researcher at The University of the Western Cape during this period. The staff members from UWC who were part of two of the eight LACs were exclusively white, thus representing only a narrow fragment of the broad specter of identities that should have been represented in this work.

... the lure and attraction of the international economic and technological order (...) A country's future (...) is to integrate its polity, economy, and critically, its education system into the standardised structure of the world system. The effect of this is to universalise as common currency the hegemonic knowledge system of the Western world. In pursuit of this, not unexpectedly, local considerations, local knowledges and local understandings of the world were cast aside (Nekhwevha 1999:498).

This coincides with Soudien and Baxen (1997), who state that the OBE process has been concerned with producing a “universal subject with universally good attributes” (Soudien & Baxen 1999:138). The problem, however, is that the nature of these attributes have not been defined and they have not been located in a social context. The result of this is that the diversified mass of learners in South Africa, most of who attend schools, which are still underprivileged, have to cope with a curriculum and an educational methodology that does not take their present context, or past, into consideration; it does not “speak” to them as individuals or consider their identities. Nkhwevha (1999) contends that there is a striking absence of African educational philosophy and culture in the South African educational legislation. He strongly emphasises the need for young Africans⁴⁷ to be taught their own histories to avoid a fundamentally alienated generation of Africans unfamiliar with African culture, languages, ideas and values (Nkhwevha 1999:502). “It is my considered view that educational and economic liberation are intertwined”, Nkhwevha (1999:499) continues, and thus underlines what Harley et al. (2000) warns of with regard to the educational system’s “unequalising tendency” (Harley et al. 2000:302). When the educational system of South Africa is dominated by Western ideas and concepts, alien to the majority of citizens in the country, this clearly affects their individual and common identity. Nkhwevha (1999) relates this to the issue of uncritically accepting English as the main language of communication in education, research, technology and business, and argues that no country ever achieved high levels of economic and cultural development where the majority of citizens were compelled to communicate in a language, which is their second or even third language (Nkhwevha 1999). Therefore, as an identity shaping mechanism, it is essential to make African languages central to the education process of an African children, and as well to “indigenise the knowledge base for development” (Nkhwevha 1999:503).

I argue that Nkhwevha’s (1999:503) “insurgency approach” to African education is an extremely significant contribution to a contemporary discourse on education in South Africa.

⁴⁷ I interpret Nkhwevha’s (1999) use of “African” in this context to refer to those who stem from inhabitants of the country prior to 1652; presently the black population.

There is without doubt a great need for intellectuals who strive to preserve African traditions and who alert to the risk of uncritically accepting Western cultural hegemony as a universally “modern” concept suited to the needs of contemporary South Africa. I will contend however, that within the South African context it is of great importance to create a curriculum discourse, which embraces not only the country’s African heritage, but also the multitude of ethnicities that have been shaped throughout hundreds of years. This diverse ethnic reality is distinctive for the identity of most South Africans and would be most unwise to ignore in an identity reshaping process.

Within this overarching reflection on the identity shaping mechanisms in South African education, I now wish to turn my focus more specifically to those who this thesis is actually centred on - the black teachers of South Africa. In the midst of their struggle to comprehend centralised and complex educational directives, they are battling to redefine their identities. It has been expected of them to fit smoothly into the teacher role of the new South Africa without much preparation or guidance. How can these teachers be equipped with the tools necessary to meet the demands of their professional lives, how can policy be transformed into something which is meaningful?

Efforts on both a macro and a micro level are needed in order to make this happen. I argue that the primary concern will be to put great efforts into closing the gap between the centralised decision making level of policy and the practical reality of implementation. Policy texts should be articulated in a way that does not require extensive efforts of interpretation, and as Harley et al. (2000) recommends, policy should be implemented locally by those most in touch with the school realities (Harley et al. 2000). Furthermore, the task of closing the policy/practice gap will probably be greatly aided if actors from the practice level are involved in the development and articulation of new educational policy. This will hopefully adjust the view of teachers that seem to be prominent on this macro level, which implies that all teachers in South Africa are equally equipped to perform at the level of extended professionalism. When reading South African educational policy texts one may get the impression that the country’s teachers are a unified mass of practitioners with the same characteristics and traits. Including this supposedly unanimous group in policy articulation and development may create a more realistic insight into the world of teachers, and also serve as a way of “africanising” the curriculum and thus allow for better identity reshaping conditions for teachers.

There should also be an articulated acknowledgement of the effect of insufficient resource allocation to South African schools, and its implications for teachers' ability to perform. In this way, the educational system might be a step closer in the task of avoiding the unequalising effect that Harley et al. (2000) warn of, and in addition to resulting in more practically viable and comprehensible policy texts, it may in turn lead to a more adequate resource allocation. In this way, schools would not be forced to give less priority to the essential task of teaching as much of their energy is spent on catering for other and more urgent needs than the acquisition of knowledge. An example of this would be for schools such as Qinqa Mntwana to be able to feed their learners so that the teachers do not have to struggle to keep the attention of big classes of hungry children with a reduced ability to concentrate due to a lack of nutrition. The black teachers' inherent practice of Ubuntu is a most valuable asset for under resourced black schools of South Africa; however, teachers fulfil such a magnitude of roles for learners in need of emotional and social support that they should not be alone in catering for these critical needs. A possible solution to this would be to work closely with teams of social workers and therapists that could assist the teachers in their work.

While on the topic of resource allocation, it is clear that the teaching profession in South Africa is in great need of increased remuneration. This is especially true for black teachers and teachers from other previously disadvantaged groups in the country. Teachers who work in under resourced schools are not paid according to the multitude of tasks that their jobs explicitly and implicitly demand, and this may have serious implications for their motivation and thus their professional performance. Higher salaries and improved benefit arrangements for teachers would have a series of desirable effects that would benefit the South African society. With an increased recognition for the teaching profession, becoming a teacher will be a smart career move, and the South African teachers' education is likely to experience an influx of students. This is likely to result in more strict entrance criteria for teachers' education, which in turn may lead to higher quality teacher training, and consequently high quality teachers. As the quality of South Africa's teacher training has not been an investigated issue in this thesis, I will not debate its potential for improvement. However, it is clear that this educational institution does have a capacity for preparing the country's teachers in a way that will equip them with the tools necessary to master the challenges of being a teacher in South Africa. With regard Nkhwevha's (1999) appeal for an indigenisation of the educational system in South Africa; I argue that teacher education and

in-service training could greatly contribute to this process. The ready-made official “teacher identity” handed to teachers through policy legislation has proved of limited use. It is my opinion that all South African teachers, but especially the previously underprivileged ones, need to be empowered to create their own professional identities and with it, an increased capacity to translate policy directives into their practical reality. As a tool in the process of equipping black teachers with the ability to reshape their identities, I believe that a focus on African ideas, values and knowledge systems, will be of great importance. One can hope that by incorporating this in the transmission of knowledge to the future citizens of South Africa, it will bring black teachers closer to their natural identities as it will aid in lifting the ban that apartheid put on black people in South Africa by ascribing a set of unfamiliar and wrongful characteristics to them. They may gain a greater insight into their own professional identities, which will make it possible reshape them in accordance with the demands of the teacher role in today’s South Africa.

I believe that the process of redefining one’s identity is ultimately a question of managing change successfully. In recent years, black South African teachers have experienced enormous changes in their personal and professional lives, however, without the necessary guidance to manage these changes favourably. Although all black teachers wished for a radical break from the past, the transition from old to new practices was not experienced as natural and smooth. I fully support Taylor (1999), who contends that it is “particularly important to acknowledge the value of former practices, and the sense of expertise and pride that those who contributed to those practices risk losing” (Taylor 1999:8). I believe that in the context of South African schooling, the necessary reshaping of black teachers’ identities will be successfully managed only when the individual teacher at the practice level experiences that there is some degree of continuity of purpose and of meaningful circumstances. In this respect, it is significant to note that “the achievement of ‘continuity’ involves more than a simple extension of the past into the present and future” (Taylor 1999:8). In order to manage change in a good way it should not be required that one ceases to care for what has been lost, but instead aim at “abstracting what was fundamentally important in the relationship and rehabilitating it” (Marris 1974: 34 cited in Taylor 1999:8).

7. SUMMING UP

With the historical and cultural context of South Africa, stretching from apartheid rule to the first years of democratisation, as a backdrop, this thesis has set out to describe and deliberate on the concept of the professional identity of black teachers in the country. I have sought to probe into the life and work of this professional group who all have suffered from the discrimination of the past, and who performs an extremely significant job in the process of developing a young democracy. My aim was to investigate how their professional identity could be defined; how they have coped with the professional transformation expected from them, and thus evaluate the conditions for the development of a new professional identity. These themes were phrased as four broad research questions.

- A. What are the conditions for the development of a new professional identity?
- B. How can their professional identities be defined? And in which way and to what extent do their personal and professional identities overlap?
- C. How are the comprehensive requirements of the South African educational policy reform experienced and tentatively implemented in their professional reality?
- D. How, and in which way, have they coped with transforming their professional identities to suit the new South African teacher role, as prescribed in policy.

The questions have been answered by looking at the practical reality of South African schooling, in comparison to the vast amounts of new educational policy legislation that was introduced in the wake of the great reforms that took (and are taking) place post 1994. In this thesis, a brief historical recapitulation was presented followed by an introduction to basic educational reform theory and a description and critique of South Africa's contemporary educational policy. This has served as a macro perspective, creating a base on which to describe and deliberate on issues with regard to black South African teachers' professional identity in a micro perspective. The concept of professional identity has been presented and defined, and fieldwork conducted in Cape Town, South Africa, consisting of interviews with five teachers at a school in the township of Crossroads, was seen in comparison to an investigation carried out by Harley et al. (2000). This has served as a micro perspective on professional identity, and the two studies were analysed using the national policy act, Norms and Standards for Educators. The objective of this analysis was to assess to which degree the teachers that took part in the studies fulfil the roles and competencies sketched out in this policy document and on this basis present a perspective on South Africa's educational

legislation in relation to the practical sphere of schooling and teachers' lives. Finally a two-fold deliberation is presented, which deals with the policy/practice disjunction in South African educational policy, and incorporates both the macro and micro perspectives presented. Subsequently and conclusively, a possible way ahead is sketched out, pointing to misconceptions in South African educational policy and reflections on requirements for successful change management, and for the empowerment of teachers in the country.

In closing, I would like to leave the reader with the following quote, which I believe points to a key issue in this thesis:

I am arguing for a considered rather than a 'common-sense' approach to change involving deliberate self and change management. Such an approach must acknowledge the relationship between an individual's sense of loss and their sense-of-self. This recognition offers the possibility of limiting the sense of loss by identifying the aspects of identity that will continue to offer meaning and reward in the emergent circumstances—that is, the possibility of connecting old beliefs and values with new activities or circumstances. It also involves the possibility of managing change at the level of community, working to acknowledge collective loss, and to achieve collective commitment to new organisational practices (Taylor 1999:7).

Appendix

Interview guide used during interviews at Qinqa Mntwana Primary School, 2005.

INTERVIEW GUIDE

When and where did you get your education?

Which grades and subjects do you teach?

For how long have you worked as a teacher?

Have you had other occupations than being a teacher?

What is it like to be a teacher at this school?

Can you list the tasks and responsibilities you have being a teacher?

What do you spend the most time doing and why?

Would you rather spend more time on other tasks? If so, what other tasks, and why?

What do you think is your most important task as a teacher and why?

Potential follow-up question: Is “social work” a natural part of a teaching job or is an exhausting extra job?

Potential follow-up question: Is it worth it?

What is your goal for the children?

When do you feel that you succeed as a teacher?

When do you feel that you do not succeed as a teacher?

Did you work as a teacher before 1994? How was it different from today?

Are you proud of being a teacher? Why/why not?

Do you get respect for being a teacher? From the government? From parents? From the community? From children?

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